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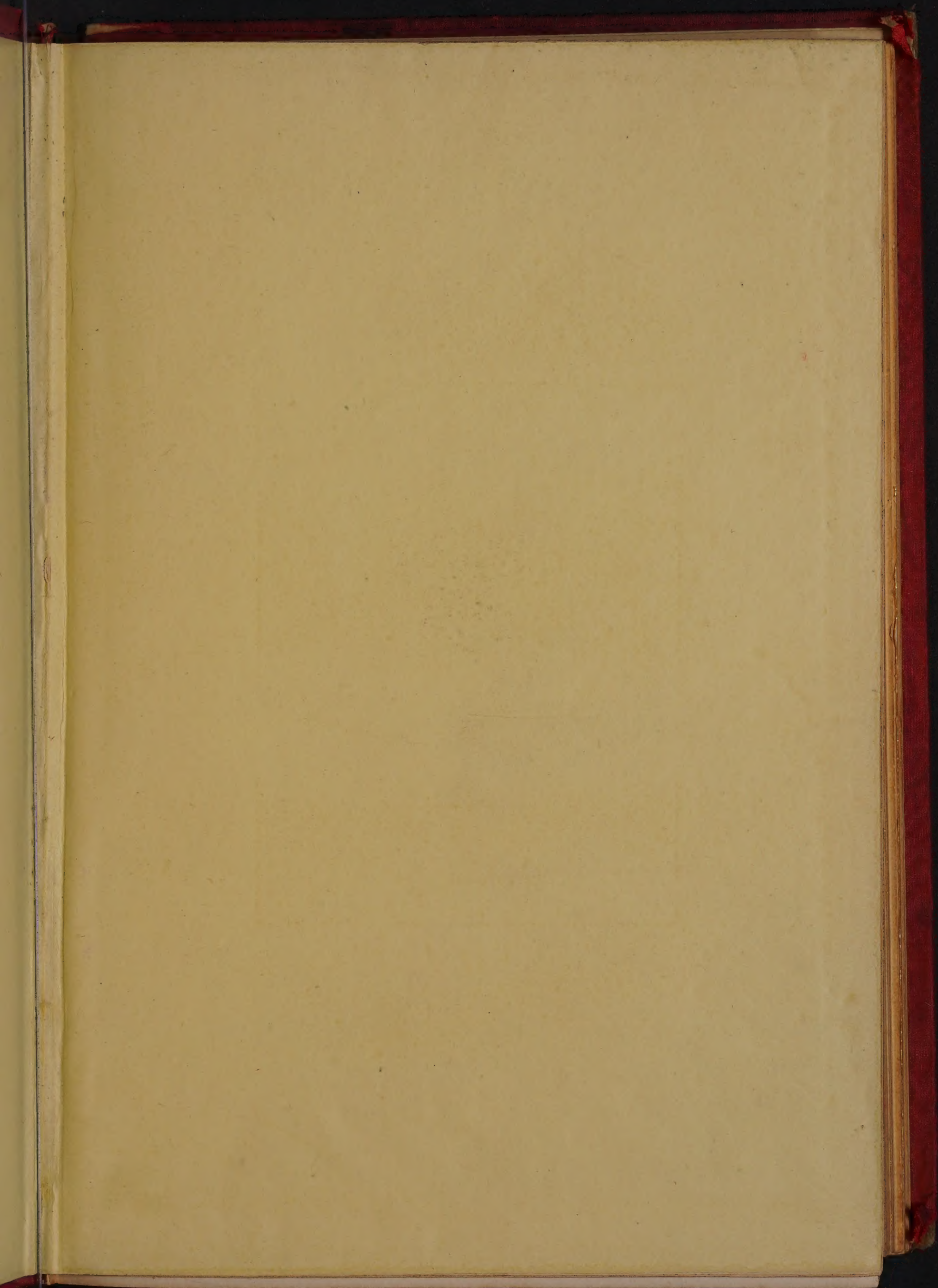


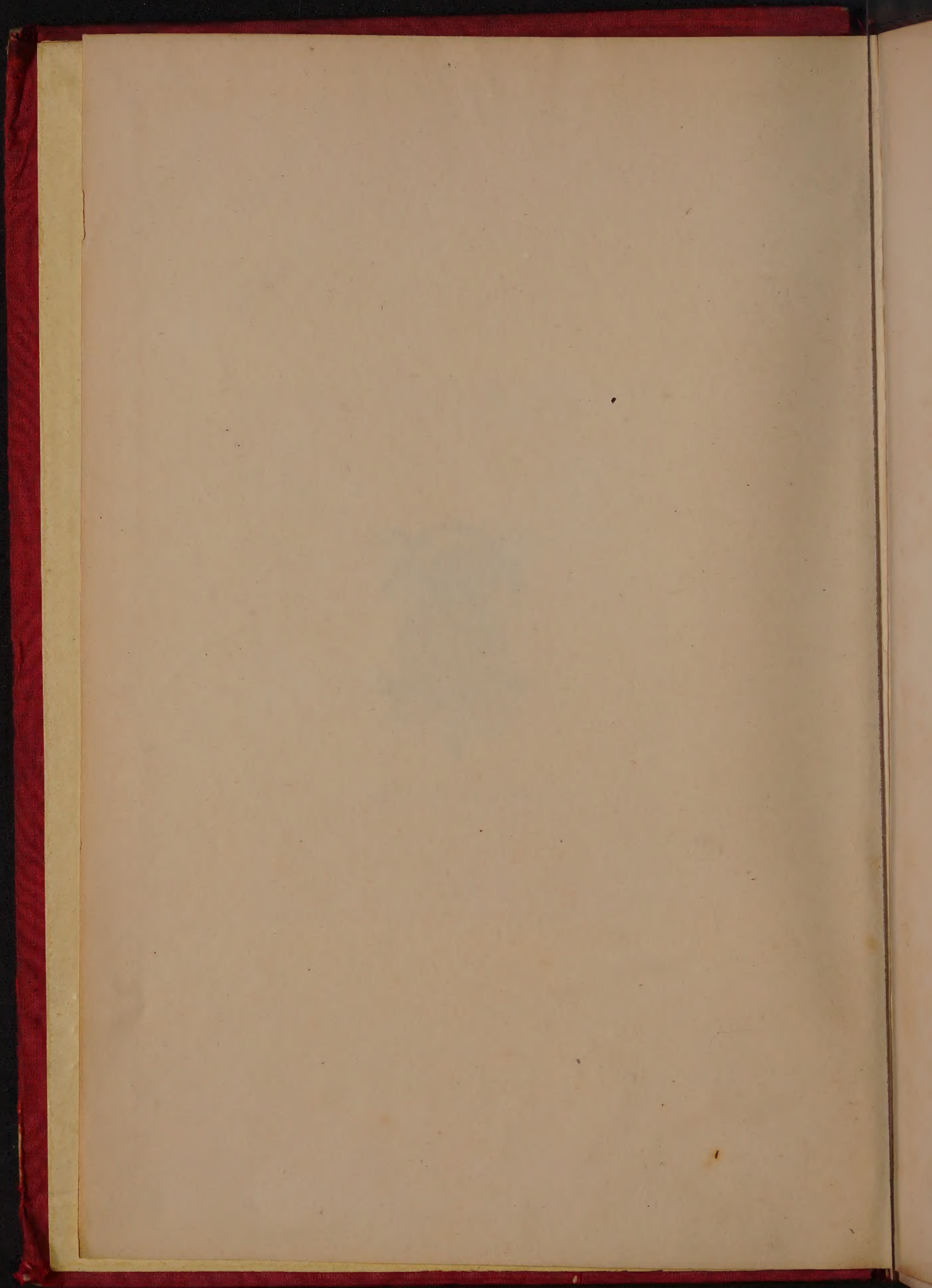


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·THE KNIGHT OF MORAR·





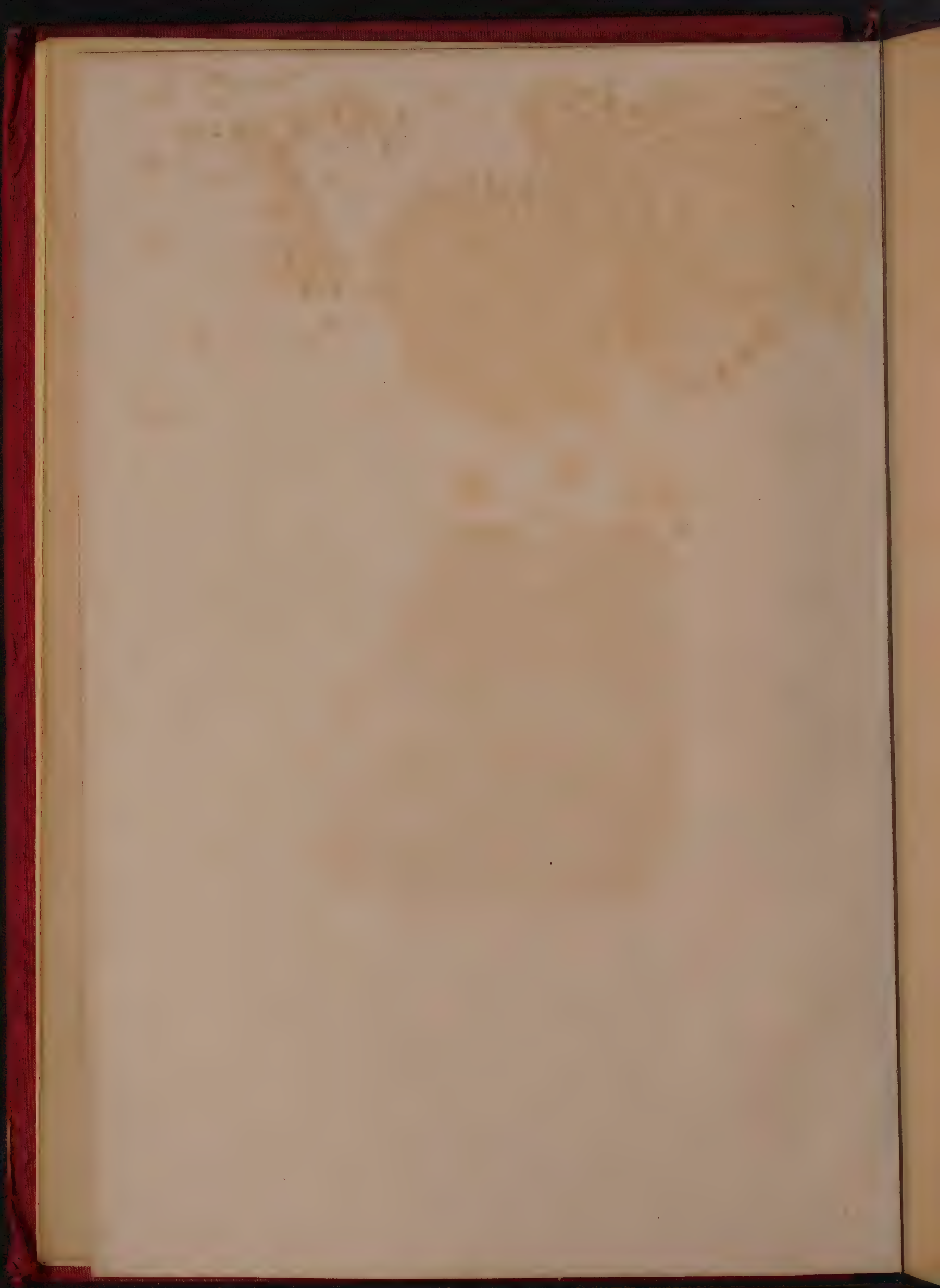
Mira Abo.

From

The Countess of Blessington.

See Page 213.





THE
K E E P S A K E

FOR

MDCCCXLI.

EDITED BY

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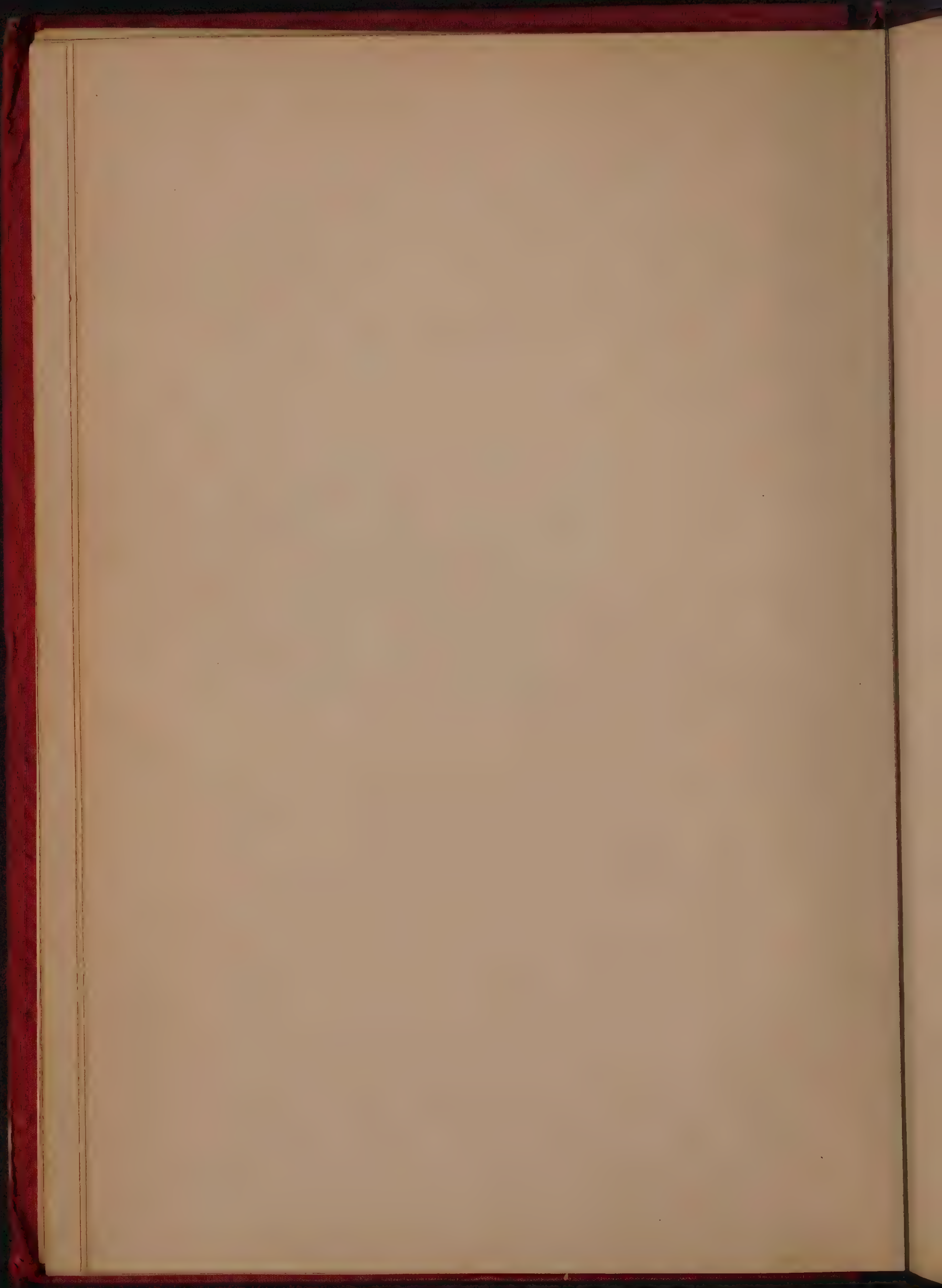
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BEATRICE DI TENDA.

BY WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

I.

MICHELE OROMBELLO.

ONE night, in the summer of 1418, a masqued fête was given by Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, in honor of the Princess of Carrara, of whom he was passionately enamoured. This revel, unusually magnificent even for Visconti, whose entertainments were always of the most splendid description, was attended by all the principal nobles of his court; by the legate of the reigning pontiff, Martino V.; by Antonio Carraffa, surnamed from his dissimulating and malignant character, *Malizia*, ambassador of Gianna, Queen of Naples; by Don Garcias Cavaniglia, deputy of Alfonso V., King of Arragon and Sicily; by the Venetian, Genoese, and Florentine envoys; and the representatives of the different Italian states. Nor was that wanting, without which no festival, however gorgeous, can be perfect,—beauty. A lovelier array of dames was never seen than was collected on this occasion. Foremost among them ranked the queen of the revel,—the beautiful Princess of Carrara. It is scarcely necessary to describe her, and indeed her charms almost defy description. Suffice it to

say, she was one of those superb blondes only to be found in the north of Italy, with light satin tresses, eyes at once lustrous and languishing, and blue as the skies; features cast in the most exquisite mould; a full, voluptuous figure; and a complexion so delicate and so transparent, that the brightest bloom could not compare with it.

The fair Princess was in her first year of widowhood—her consort, Brunoro, Prince of Carrara and Padua, having died suddenly after their union, not without strong suspicion of poison. Her fascinations of manner and person, as has just been observed, completely captivated the licentious Visconti, who left no means untried to obtain possession of her, but failing in his attempts, he resolved upon divorcing his duchess, or otherwise removing her, to make way for the new object of his passion.

Beatrice di Tenda, Duchess of Milan, was considerably older than her lord. Her first husband, Facino Cane, the renowned condottiere, having been slain, together with Giovanni Maria Visconti, the present Duke's elder brother, on their way to the church of Saint Gothard, an alliance was immediately formed between her and Filippo, who by this means obtained the sovereignty of Tortona, Novara, Vercelli, and Alexandria, and defeated the claims of Ettore Visconti, another aspirant to the dukedom of Milan. Regardless of the advantages he had derived from the Duchess, Filippo, as soon as his government was firmly established, began to neglect and ill treat her—making it evident he had espoused her only for convenience. To indifference succeeded aversion; and his dislike was manifested by repeated acts of cruelty and oppression. He compelled her to submit to every possible indignity; to wait upon him at table; and to perform offices, from which the meanest of his attendants revolted. Beatrice bore this tyrannical usage with the most exemplary patience. She

neither repined, nor remonstrated; trusting that implicit obedience to her lord's will would at length turn his heart. But so far from being moved to compassion, Filippo was irritated by her conduct. He heaped fresh insults upon her, and sought some plausible pretext to rid himself of a burthen he began to find insupportable.

About this time, he became enamoured of the Princess of Carrara, and his hatred for the one increased in proportion to his passion for the other. A hint dropped by the Princess was not lost upon him. When warmly urging his suit, she checked him, and observed in a significant tone—"I pray your highness to desist from further importunity. So long as the present bar exists between us, I can never be yours." "I understand," replied the Duke; "it shall be speedily removed." And from that moment, his whole thoughts were bent upon destroying the Duchess.

Several means of accomplishing his purpose presented themselves. But he rejected them all, from a fear that in case suspicion should fall upon him, the four cities he had received as the dower of the injured Duchess would revolt, and involve him in a war, which, at this juncture, he was anxious to avoid. He resolved, therefore, to proceed cautiously and securely.

Somewhat less ferocious in manner, though not less sanguinary in nature than his brother Giovanni, whose thirst for blood was so insatiable that he would deliver criminals to his hounds to be chased and torn in pieces, Filippo Visconti had not one redeeming quality, except courage, and this was tarnished by cruelty. Utterly destitute of generosity, he never requited a favor but with an injury; and having no regard for his plighted faith, was held in distrust by all his allies. Still, he was crafty and calculating, and his cunning made him a match for most of his opponents. In person he was tall, and finely formed. His features were handsome,

but disfigured by a sinister expression. His demeanour was singularly majestic.

During the early part of the fête, Filippo devoted himself exclusively to the Princess. Attired in her colours, white and blue, and attended by a band of courtiers similarly arrayed, he received her on her arrival at the palace; conducted her to the dancing-hall,—the music-chamber,—the brilliantly-illuminated gardens,—the banquet,—and finally to a small conservatory filled with the choicest flowers, which none were permitted to enter but themselves. There, while engaged in a tender *tête-à-tête* with his mistress, who, flattered by his homage, and bewildered by the enchanting scene around her, appeared disposed to lend a more favorable ear to his suit, the Duke was greatly astonished and offended by the sudden entrance of an attendant. The name of the new comer, who was remarkable for his personal strength and forbidding aspect, was Squarcia Giramo. He had filled the office of master of the hounds to the late Duke Giovanni; and his savage disposition recommended him to the favor of Filippo, who placed him near his person. The Princess having abandoned her hand to the Duke, uttered a slight scream at Squarcia's appearance, and hastily withdrew it; while her lover, plucking his dagger from its sheath, seemed disposed to sacrifice the unwelcome intruder to his anger. Something, however, in the look of the latter arrested his arm.

"When your highness learns what news I bring," he said, "you will thank—not menace me."

"Speak then," cried the Duke, fiercely.

"I cannot speak here," replied Squarcia. "Will it please your highness to grant me a moment's private audience?"

"No," replied Visconti, impatiently. "If you have some secret matter to disclose, you must await a more favorable opportunity. Begone!"

"What I have to say relates to the Duchess," rejoined Squarcia, mysteriously.

"To *her*!" exclaimed Visconti, in surprise. "Nay, then, I *must* hear it."

Hastily apologizing to the Princess, and promising to return instantly, he quitted the conservatory.

On gaining the adjoining apartment, he ascertained from Squarcia, whom he employed as a spy upon Beatrice, that a circumstance had just occurred, which raised a suspicion that some secret attachment existed on her part. The sum of the attendant's relation was as follows. About an hour ago, a mask, habited as a minstrel, had approached the Duchess, and greatly delighted her by his voice and musical skill. After listening to his singing for some time, during which she betrayed extraordinary emotion, she commanded him to remove his vizard. The minstrel complied; and on beholding his features, which were those of a youth of remarkable personal attractions, she had fainted.

"Is this all?" observed the Duke, when Squarcia concluded.

"It is, your highness," replied the attendant.

"I see nothing in it. The Duchess was struck by an accidental resemblance in the youth to some one she formerly knew—that is all. Thou art an officious knave, to trouble me with so slight a matter."

"It is not so slight as your highness imagines," rejoined Squarcia. "I have never seen the Duchess so agitated before."

"Where is she now?" demanded Visconti.

"She has been conveyed to her own apartments," answered Squarcia.

"And the minstrel?"

"He is in the music-hall. He stood like one stupefied after the occurrence; but when the Duchess was removed, he

wandered with slow steps and a dejected air in the direction I have mentioned."

"Bring him hither," said the Duke, after a moment's reflection, "I would question him."

Squarcia departed, and presently returned with a youth, whose good looks Visconti acknowledged had not been overrated. He appeared about eighteen, and his proud bearing proclaimed him of distinguished origin. The contrast between his noble and prepossessing countenance and the lowering and villainous looks of Squarcia was too striking to pass unnoticed.

"By Saint Ambrosio, a handsome gallant!" exclaimed the Duke, as he approached. "How are you called, fair sir?"

"Michele Orombello," replied the youth.

"I neither remember your name nor person, Messer Michele," pursued the Duke, fixing a scrutinizing glance upon him. "How long have you been in Milan?"

"Three days," replied Michele. "I came in the train of the ambassador of the Queen of Naples."

"Malizia is graced in his follower," observed the Duke, sarcastically. "And now, Messer Michele, as I doubt not you have a quick eye for beauty, tell me whom you think the fairest dame in my court?"

"Were your highness to ask me whom I think the most injured, I could answer more readily," rejoined Michele.

"Whom should you say, then?" demanded Visconti, sternly.

"Your Duchess," replied the youth.

Squarcia laid his hand upon his dagger, and looked at his lord, but the latter took no notice of the movement.

"You are a frank speaker, Michele," said Visconti; "but I like you none the worse for your boldness. The Duchess is a deeply-injured lady—granted. You are, no doubt, eager to redress her wrongs."

"I would shed the last drop of my blood in her defence," cried Michele.

"I thought as much," rejoined Visconti. "Her highness shall be made acquainted with your devotion. If I can prevail upon Malizia to transfer you to the Duchess's service, will you consent to the exchange?"

"Consent!" echoed Michele, his countenance beaming with delight, "I am transported with joy at the thought. But your highness is mocking me."

"Not so," replied Visconti. "I am as much rejoiced as yourself that the Duchess will have an attendant so devoted to her interests. And now, rejoin your companions, signor. To-morrow, I will speak to his excellency."

"Accept my heartfelt thanks, my lord," said Michele, bending the knee before him. "I have scarcely deserved this kindness at your hands."

Visconti stamped upon the ground impatiently, and the youth arose.

"Keep strict watch over him," observed the Duke to Squarcia, as soon as they were alone; "and if aught further occurs, apprise me instantly. You were right in your suspicions. There is some mystery about this youth which I cannot fathom."

"I will resolve it for your highness," replied Squarcia, smiling grimly. "Having got the scent, I will hunt down the game as surely as ever did my best wolf-hound in the days of Duke Giovanni."

"Go then, brave dog," rejoined Visconti, pushing him from him; "and if you bring down the noblest hind in the forest, your reward shall be proportionate to the service."

"My reward may be a dog's—a blow when the deed is done," observed Squarcia, drily. "No matter. Your highness's commands shall be obeyed."

With this, he departed upon his mission, while Visconti returned to the Princess.

Elated by his interview with the Duke, and unable to conceive why such good fortune had so suddenly befallen him, Michele Orombello could listen no more to the music, nor take any further part in the dance. Separating himself from the crowd of revellers, he pondered over the occurrences of the evening. The idea of the Duchess was ever present to him. He thought of her marble cheek, which pale as death before, had crimsoned at the sound of his voice; of her large, lustreless black eyes, which had kindled with new fire, as he proceeded with the melody. He heard again her commands to him to unmask—her cry when the order was obeyed—and his bosom palpitated with strange emotions. Was the interest she felt in him love? He scarcely dared to ask himself the question. And yet his heart refused to answer in the negative.

While occupied with these reflections, he felt a gentle pressure on his arm, and heard a low voice breathe in his ear—“Follow me.”

Looking round, Michele perceived a masked female, and pursuing her retreating figure through the throng, entered the great hall, in which the dancers were still footing it merrily. Thence he tracked her down a flight of marble steps into the garden, and proceeding along a terrace lighted with coloured lamps, struck into a dark walk, edged with clipped yew-trees. Here his conductress paused, and said in a whisper, “Follow that path, signor. It will bring you to a temple, where you will find the lady who expects you.”

With a beating heart and quick step, Michele hastened along the path indicated to him. Just as he was about to enter the temple, he cast a look behind, and fancied he could discern through the darkness a man creeping stealthily after him. As

he gazed at the object it disappeared, and thinking he might be deceived, he pushed open the door of the structure, and beheld the Duchess.

She was alone. By the light of a lamp placed upon a table beside her, Michele saw that her countenance bore the traces of severe suffering, and though she struggled to maintain her composure, she was still fearfully agitated. The youth's first impulse was to throw himself at her feet. She instantly raised him.

"I have sent for you," she said hurriedly, "to tell you you are in danger. I have heard of your interview with the Duke, and of his promise to you. It must never be fulfilled."

"Wherefore not, madam?" asked Michele, in astonishment.

"You must depart at once, and secretly, if you would preserve your life," she continued, without noticing the question.

"The Duke meditates your destruction."

"How have I incurred his resentment?" inquired Michele.

"By your boldness of speech," she answered. "But I am the chief cause of his enmity against you."

"You, madam!"

"To be plain," replied the Duchess, after a moment's hesitation, "he thinks I love you, and would place you near me that he may destroy us both. But I will defeat his scheme. You, at least, shall avoid the snare."

"Think not of me a moment, madam," replied the youth, passionately. "Suffer me, I entreat you, to remain with you at whatever risk to myself."

"I have already told you it cannot be. If you would prove your devotion to me, you will go. I owe you some explanation of my strange conduct, and you shall have it. I am interested—deeply interested in you. Do not mistake me. It is not love I bear you—at least, not the love the Duke sup-

poses. You resemble one whose memory is most dear to me—so strikingly, that I could almost fancy you were he.”

“Beseech your highness to tell me his name!” cried Michele, eagerly.

“First let me know your own, and your history?” rejoined the Duchess. “I am ignorant of both.”

“I am called Michele Orombello,” replied the youth, “and all I know of my history is this. I was found on the banks of the Lago di Guarda by a peasant, whose name I bear, and to whom I am indebted for my early nurture. Becoming dissatisfied with my condition, as I grew in years, I quitted my humble home and protector, and wandered from city to city, encountering various vicissitudes and adventures, until I reached Naples, where I was fortunate enough to attract the attention of Antonio Caraffa, who appointed me his page. Hence I chanced to accompany him on his embassy to the court of the Duke your husband.”

“Have you no clue to your birth?” asked the Duchess, who had listened with breathless interest to his relation.

“Only this,” he answered, producing the fragment of a letter. “It was found upon my person by my preserver, Orombello. The few words that can be deciphered refer to the destruction of an infant,—alluding, doubtless, to myself. It appears to be an order from some powerful noble to his vassal. But I have vainly sought to discover the writer.”

“Give it me,” cried the Duchess, snatching the paper from him.

As she gazed at it, a violent tremor seized her. She shivered from head to foot, and would have fallen, if Michele had not tendered her support.

“Your highness knows who wrote that letter?” he remarked, as soon as her agitation had in some degree subsided.

“I do,” she replied. “But do not question me. I dare

not—cannot tell you. The knowledge would be fatal. I am now more than ever anxious for your safety. You must quit the palace without a moment's delay. Repair to the northern gate of the city, and in an hour a fleet steed shall be provided for you. Do not draw the bridle till you reach Novara. There you will be safe. My faithful subjects will protect you. To-morrow, I will dispatch messengers to Vincenzo Marliano, governor of the citadel. He is my assured friend, and you will learn from him the meaning of this mystery. Take this gold—these ornaments," she added, opening a coffer, and spreading its glittering contents before him, while she at the same time detached a string of pearls from her neck, and a circlet of gold from her head—"take them," she cried, forcing them upon him, "you may need them."

So saying, she opened her arms, and straining the youth, who was bewildered with astonishment, to her bosom, wept aloud.

From this sad embrace they were roused by the sudden opening of the door, which was instantly closed with a jar that shook the whole building. Breaking from her companion at the sound, the Duchess beheld Visconti. He was accompanied by several nobles of his court, and a numerous train of attendants, among whom was Squarcia Giramo. A smile of bitter satisfaction played upon his features.

"Lost!—lost!" shrieked the Duchess.

"You shall not perish unavenged!" cried Michele, drawing his dagger, and springing upon the Duke.

But the blow was intercepted by Squarcia. Seizing the youth's arm, he wrested the weapon from his grasp, and would have plunged it to his heart, if Visconti had not prevented him.

"Harm him not," he cried, "I have another fate in reserve for him. My lords," he continued, "you have all been wit-

nesses to my dishonor, and will testify to the truth of what you have seen?"

"Assuredly, your highness," they answered.

"How say you, then?" he continued. "Is the Duchess guilty, or not?"

"Guilty," replied the assemblage, with one voice.

"One word in arrest of judgment, my lord," exclaimed the Duchess, advancing towards him.

"Not one," replied Visconti, harshly repulsing her. "Squarcia Giramo, let the adultress and her paramour be instantly conveyed to my castle of Binasco. There let the torturers deal with them."

"They shall force no avowal of guilt from me," cried the Duchess.

"Nor from me," added Michele.

"Let them die upon the rack then," rejoined the Duke.

And followed by his train, he quitted the temple, and returned to the festivities within the palace.

II.

BINASCO.

THE ancient castle of Binasco, whither the captives were conducted, in obedience to the Duke's mandates, lies about three leagues from Milan, on the road to Pavia. It is a vast and gloomy pile, and, at the period in question, was strongly fortified. The Duchess and her companion were placed in dark subterranean dungeons, and underwent the most horrible tortures. More than twenty times, Beatrice was stretched upon the rack, but her firmness was proof against the severest agonies. Resolutely denying the crime laid to her charge, she refused to exculpate herself by any explanation of her mysterious conduct towards Michele Orombello. Conveyed to their place of imprisonment in separate litters, the unhappy pair had not exchanged a word since their fatal meeting in the temple. All the Duchess's inquiries concerning her fellow-prisoner were met by sullen silence on the part of the jailors; nor could she learn aught relating to him, until one day, Squarcia Giramo, who superintended her examinations, and regulated the degrees of torture to which she was subjected, entered her cell, and informed her, with a look of savage delight, that he had confessed.

"It is false, villain," returned Beatrice, incredulously. "He cannot have confessed a crime he has never committed."

"The youth is not made of such stubborn stuff as your highness," rejoined Squarcia, grinning. "When we were about to bind him to the wheel this morning, he requested to be released; acknowledged his guilt in full; signed the confession, which has since been transmitted to the Duke, whose arrival at the castle is momentarily expected; and prayed only

for speedy death to put a period to his sufferings:— a petition, I have no doubt, that will be readily granted.”

“Horror!” cried Beatrice, distractedly. “Can this be true?”

“I swear it by my soul’s safety,” returned Squarcia. “And I advise your highness to follow your lover’s example. Further obstinacy will avail you nothing.”

“Wretch!” cried Beatrice fiercely. But instantly checking herself, she added—“You say the Duke is expected at the castle. On his arrival, tell him I *must* see him without a moment’s delay. I have a secret to disclose, which it is important to him to know, but which, if he comes not instantly, shall never pass my lips. Tell him this. And take heed no injury is done the youth, or I will yet find means of terribly avenging his death on all concerned in it. Do you hear me?”

“I hear, and will obey your highness,” replied Squarcia. And he quitted the cell.

Words cannot paint the anguish of the Duchess. Severe has had been her recent bodily suffering, it was nothing to the mental torture she now endured. Several hours elapsed, and Visconti came not. At length, worn out with vain expectation, she was about to abandon herself wholly to despair, when the massive prison door revolved upon its hinges, and admitted her husband.

He was cased in complete armour, except his helmet, which he had laid aside on reaching the castle, and his looks were as formidable as his steelly apparel.

“What would you with me, madam?” he demanded, after a pause, during which he eyed her sternly.

“I would make a bargain with you for the life of Michele Orombello,” she answered.

“Indeed!” exclaimed Visconti. “And what do you propose to offer me in exchange?”

"My own life," she replied.

"It is mine already," rejoined the Duke.

"Not so, my lord," replied Beatrice; "you cannot lawfully execute me till I have confessed the crime with which I am charged. I may expire upon the rack, but I will maintain my innocence to the last, unless you consent to spare this youth. His life is of no consequence to you compared with mine. Put me to death without warrant, and the four cities I brought you in dower—Tortona, Novara, Vercelli, and Alexandria,—will revolt from you. This you know full well. Comply with my request, and I will utter whatever you may dictate, and declare myself justly condemned."

"Your love for this youth is stronger than I thought it," remarked Visconti;—"stronger than a chance attachment could be. Who is he?"

"My son," rejoined Beatrice.

"Your son!" ejaculated the Duke, recoiling.

"Hear me, Visconti," continued the Duchess. "Before I wedded my first husband, Facino Cane, I had indulged a guilty passion for one of my father's pages. The fruit of my indiscretion was a son. The infant was committed to Antonio Marliano, now grand seneschal of Novara, but then my humblest attendant. He told me he had destroyed it. I will not dwell upon the remorse occasioned by the dark offence I had committed, or by the still darker offence by which I sought to hide it. My peace was gone for ever. And I looked upon my after sufferings as the just retribution of Heaven for my criminal conduct."

"Let this pass, madam," observed Visconti, scornfully.

"How did you recognize the youth?"

"His voice first attracted my attention," replied the Duchess, "and when I beheld his features, their resemblance to him I had loved was too striking to be mistaken. My heart assured

me he was the son I had supposed dead. And on ascertaining his history I found I was not deceived."

"The youth is not aware of the secret of his birth?" demanded the Duke.

"He is not," rejoined Beatrice, "and never shall be. It shall perish with me."

Visconti was for some time lost in reflection. The Duchess watched his countenance with the most intense anxiety. But it was impossible to read what was passing in his breast. At last he spoke.

"I will spare the youth on the terms you propose," he said.

"Swear it," she rejoined, "by all your hopes of salvation."

"My word must suffice," he answered, coldly. "It is as binding as the strongest oath."

The wretched Beatrice did not dare to contradict him.

"In a few minutes all shall be in readiness," pursued the Duke. "Perform your part of the agreement, and doubt not I will perform mine."

So saying, he withdrew.

His first object was to seek out Squarcia Giramo. After giving several directions to the attendant, he thus concluded: "Make every preparation for an execution. Let a block be placed in the base-court, and let the headsman with the instrument of death upon his shoulder take up a position beside it. When Michele Orombello is dismissed from my presence, if I make no sign, suffer him to leave the castle uninjured. But if I wave my scarf, seize him, and let his head be instantly stricken off."

"I understand," replied Squarcia.

Soon after this, Visconti betook himself to a platform overlooking the court, whence he perceived that his injunctions had been exactly fulfilled. A trumpet was then sounded, and the summons was immediately answered by a large train of

nobles and gentlemen, who had accompanied him from Milan. The Duke acquainted the assemblage that he had called them to hear the confession of the Duchess, who having repented of her guilt, desired to atone for it with her blood. As he spoke, a door at one end of the platform was opened, and Beatrice was led forth, while from a portal at the opposite extremity came Michele Orombello. Thus confronted, the miserable mother and her son gazed at each other in silence. Enfeebled by the torture he had undergone, Michele looked like the shadow of himself. The Duchess seemed to have suffered equally, and to be equally prostrated. But she had evidently strung herself up to some mighty effort, and her deportment retained its accustomed majesty. Her attire was somewhat disordered, and her dark hair unbound and floating over her shoulders. Her appearance awakened the deepest commiseration amid the beholders.

"My lords," she said, firmly, "you are no doubt aware for what purpose I am brought hither. I confess myself culpable towards the Duke. I neither expect, nor desire mercy. All I request is, that the punishment of my offence may be visited on my own head. I alone am guilty. Do not let him I have tempted suffer for my fault!"

Michele, whose faculties seemed completely benumbed, made no attempt to interrupt her. He looked as if he did not clearly understand what was said. And when she had done speaking, his head dropped upon his breast.

"This gold, and these ornaments—the latter known to belong to the Duchess—were found upon the person of the younger prisoner," said a jailor, stepping forward.

"They were given him by me," rejoined Beatrice, "and corroborate what I have just asserted—that I was the temptress!"

"They do!" vociferated Visconti, dashing them to the ground, and trampling them beneath his mailed feet with

feigned fury. "You have heard the Duchess's confession, my lords, and shall now hear my decision. In consideration of Michele's youth, and the circumstances advanced in his favor, I consent to spare his life. But for her who has dishonored my bed, and stained my name, I have no compassion. She dies within the hour!"

There was a deep, dread silence, broken only by the sobs of Orombello, who, though scarcely conscious of what was going forward, seemed to comprehend the perilous situation of the Duchess. He made several attempts to throw himself at Visconti's feet, but was prevented by those around him.

"Take the prisoner hence," said the Duke to the guards, "and set him at liberty."

"Let me embrace him before he goes. Let me bid him an eternal farewell!" cried Beatrice.

"You ask more than can be granted, misguided woman," rejoined Visconti. "Remove him."

The command was obeyed, and as Michele was forced away, he cast one look of inexpressible anguish at his mother.

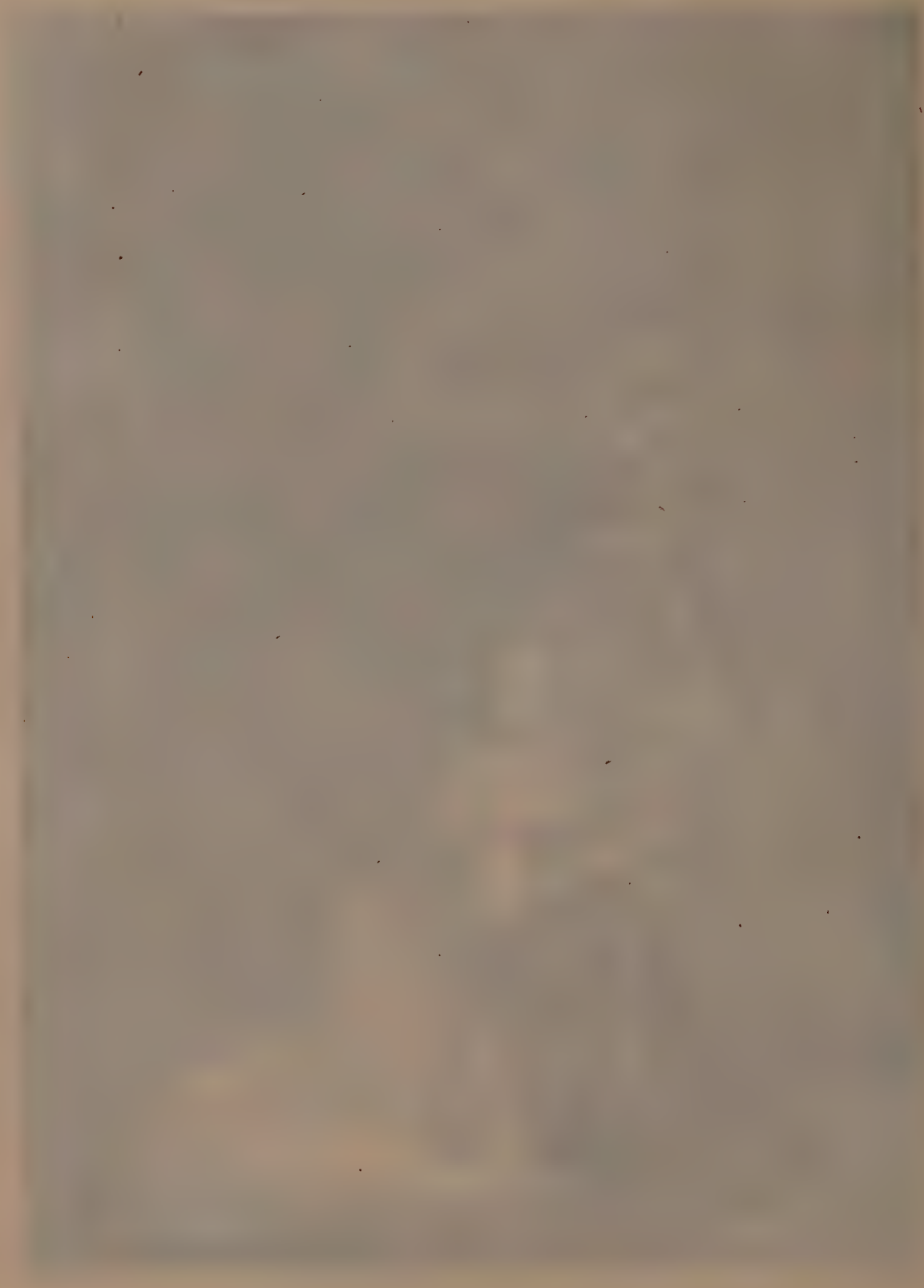
"Leave me, my lords," said Visconti, motioning the nobles to withdraw. "I have a few words to exchange with the Duchess."

They were alone, and regarded each other face to face. And he who had seen them, and been ignorant of the relation in which they stood to each other, would have taken Visconti for the offender, and Beatrice for the judge,—so overawed was the former by the look fixed upon him. Neither spoke, but each guessed the other's thoughts.

Suddenly, Beatrice exclaimed—"I hear him in the base-court. I shall see him once again!" And before she could be prevented, she ran towards the low wall edging the platform, and leaning over it, gazed into the court beneath. "I see him!" she continued. "The guards release him!—He is free!"







He takes his way towards the gate ! You have kept your word, Visconti, and my dying breath shall bless you. My poor son ! His footsteps totter. He is so weak he can scarcely support himself. He will fall ! No, he revives. Oh ! that dreadful rack. You might have spared his tender limbs, Visconti. But he will live, and I am satisfied. Ah ! what do I behold ? There is a block behind that pillar, and a man beside it, wielding a huge, two-handed sword."

"The block and the sword for you," said the Duke. "Come away."

"Squarcia Giramo is among the crowd. I should know his hideous face among a thousand. He looks this way. He expects some signal."

"He is eager for your execution," rejoined Visconti. "You have looked long enough." And he dragged her forcibly from the parapet.

"Visconti !" cried the Duchess, falling on her knees, "you mean to kill him. You have played me false."

"What makes you think so ?" returned the Duke, detaching the scarf from his breastplate with his left hand, while with his right he kept fast hold of the Duchess. "What makes you think so ?"

"Your manner—those fatal preparations—every thing," replied Beatrice.

"He will speedily be beyond my reach," rejoined Visconti, waving the scarf, unperceived by the Duchess.

The signal was immediately answered by the flashing of the sword. Visconti, who cast a glance over his shoulder, could not see the blow struck, but he heard the dead dull sound marking the descent of the weapon upon the block.

"Ah ! what was that ?" cried Beatrice, alarmed by the noise. "Answer me ! as you shall answer your Maker. Have you slain him ?"

"Go and see," replied the Duke, releasing her.

Beatrice rushed to the parapet. She beheld a group round the block, which divided the next moment, and disclosed the headless trunk of her son.

The miserable mother staggered backwards, and caught at her husband for support.

"False Duke!" she cried, regarding him with a withering glance; "false and disloyal gentleman! you have broken your word with me, and henceforth none shall trust you. Your name shall be tarnished—your memory abhorred. Shame and dishonor shall be your portion, and the pangs you have inflicted upon me shall be returned with tenfold sharpness upon yourself!" And overcome by the violence of her emotion, she sank senseless on the pavement.

She recovered from her swoon only to prepare for instant death. Before she was led to the block, she had a brief conference with a priest, who was appointed to administer to her the last rites of religion, and to whom she gave a ring. She then calmly resigned herself to her fate, and the headsman performed his office. When all was over, the monk quitted the castle, affirming he had masses to say that night at the monastery of San Simpliciano, at Milan, for the soul of the departed Duchess.

Visconti returned the next day to the palace. On arriving there, he was horrified at learning that the Princess of Carrara was dangerously ill. She grew hourly worse, and expired the same night in dreadful agonies. It was evident from the appearance of the body that her death had been occasioned by poison. Suspicion fell upon the monk, who was ascertained to have visited her on his return from Binasco, and he was immediately sought for. But he had already provided for his safety, and fled to Venice.

VERSES,

BY THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY.

THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF LORD CHIEF JUSTICE BUSHE HAVING SENT LORD WELLESLEY AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE "SALIX BABYLONICA," WITH SOME COMPLIMENTARY VERSES, HE RETURNED THESE VERSES IN ANSWER, AND SENT THEM TO KILMOREY, IN THE COUNTY OF KILKENNY, WHERE THE FAMILY WAS ASSEMBLED.

WEEP no more, willow! weep no more!
 Thy days of tears are past;
 Planted on Britain's happy shore,
 Repose in peace at last:
 And teach us still our peace to prize,
 Teach us how nations fall,
 How Faith, approved by Heaven's pure eyes,
 Saves kingdoms, kings, and all.
 Wild Erin's muses turn to thee,
 To lull her stormy breast,
 And hail thee now, the sacred tree
 Of freedom, peace, and rest.
 Under thy shade accept their vow!
 And may some gentle hand
 Bear from thy stem a peaceful bough!
 To calm that troubled land;

And raise thee midst those sylvan seats,
Fanned by Heaven's purest airs,
Where ermined Justice oft retreats,
To rest from public cares.
There, from the sage's blooming race,
As round his bowers they play,
A muse shall rise, in youthful grace,
To move a pious lay.

THE LAY.

"Wisdom and Learning's gifts adorn his head ;
His heart with pity and with mercy glows ;
His tongue is eloquence ; his hand is spread
To cheer the poor, and soothe the sufferer's woes ;
His head, his glowing heart, his tongue, his hand,
With truth and zeal still serve his country's cause ;
Firm guardians, to protect his native land,
And save her freedom, happiness, and laws.
Then twine your boughs, and wreath your shade
Around his noontide bowers,
A grateful land shall give her aid
To strew his path with flowers."

KINGSTON HOUSE,
June 6, 1840.

LEGENDS OF THE DEKHAN.

THE FATAL ARMLET;

A LEGEND OF ELLICHPOOR.

BY MEADOWS TAYLOR, AUTHOR OF "CONFESSIONS OF A THUG," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

It was one of those still, clear, delicious evenings, which often are felt towards the approach of the cool season in India, when not a vapour exists to dim the brilliancy of the moon's rays which then pour a flood of silvery light upon the beautiful earth, unknown to western climes, and fill it with a glorious radiance,—when many a coy and delicate flower which had denied itself to the garish sun, opens its heart to the cool night, and rejoices as it gives forth its fragrance,—when the air becomes loaded with perfume from tree and flower which existed not by day, as if it was intended to perfect that voluptuous love which only knoweth existence there. It was on such a night,—when all the city was hushed in sleep, and there arose no sound to disturb the dreamy silence, save, perhaps, the hoarse and distant bay of a dog which lasted only for a moment, and caused the perfect stillness which ensued, to be more impressive and soothing;—that two beings sat reclining under a canopy formed by the beauteous creeper that only opens by night, and into the large white flowers of which the silver light of heaven creeps, as they one by one expand their modest beauties to the moon. The foliage above shades them

from her rays in some degree, while it suffers enough of her light to struggle through, and disclose the features of those who are there.

One is a youth approaching manhood; the down on his lip hath not yet hardened, nor hath the fierce sun scorched his cheek, nor the rude companionship of the world caused him to assume the hard and reckless expression so common to those of his country. But his eye is fixed on vacancy, and he heeds not the caresses of her beside him, as she leans over him anxiously, and strives to possess herself of the hand, which, so firmly clenched as it is, proves that some struggle is going on in his heart of which she knows not. She does not speak, but she presses his hand to her heart in both of hers, and gazes into his face with an expression of tenderness,—of love intense,—yet of anxiety in those glorious eyes, which, if he could see them, surely he would turn to her and comfort her.

The crimson carpet on which they are lying and its velvet cushions, contrasts powerfully with the snow-white drapery of the finest muslin, which she has folded so gracefully, and yet so simply around her; but it discloses enough of a form, which though of a girl who, in a less genial climate would be unmatured, yet here, in her fifteenth summer, is of perfect beauty. She is fair for one of her land; and, were it day, you might see the blood coursing through the veins of her cheeks, which, as the struggling light falls upon them, appear pallid, and yet are exquisitely delicate. She has known no sorrow, no care;—no blight has yet fallen upon her beauty.—She was reared a delicate flower, the only offspring of her parents: and she blooms now, though transplanted into another soil, and the ornament and pride of another's house, as though a blight could never reach her, and the seasons effect no change upon her.

Alas! sorrow is coming that she knows not of; and the

beauty which now beams so brightly, will hardly see another moon such as now shineth upon it.

She has watched him thus troubled for some time; she has not spoken, but has soothed him by caresses far more eloquent than words, and he has not repulsed her; he has suffered, nay, encouraged them, for his spirit is vexed. But as the exciting thoughts gradually pass from him, he regards her with admiration, and returns the pressure of those tiny hands in a manner which assures Shireen that it is but a passing cloud, and that she may bask in the sunshine of his love with purer enjoyment when it is gone.

Alas, for both! their fate is written. Can it be avoided? Ah, no! the ways of Alla are inscrutable, and their destiny must be fulfilled by his creatures!

And long have they reclined thus; the second watch of the night is nigh and he must leave her, for it is his turn for duty at the palace of the King,—of Imâd-shah, his monarch and his patron.—One who hath risen from the lowest rank of the people, who now rules the broad plains of Berar, and has thrown off his allegiance to the parent state of Beeder. But how hath he risen from this obscurity,—he who was the offspring of infidel parents, who, in one of the battles with the Kafirs of Beejanuggur, was taken prisoner by that pearl among warriors, that lion-hearted in war, Khân Jehân the victorious? How has he attained royalty, and caused the hearts of men to follow his will, while they turn to water in his presence? Is it by valour?—is it by wisdom? Is it by justice, by generosity, by riches? No: though he had all of these, yet he would have remained in his low estate but for a friend; one powerful, —but his power was not of the earth. Deeply skilled in ancient lore was he,—but not that of the earth. It may hardly be breathed to mortal ears, lest the creatures which obey him, hear it, and convey the words to him whom they serve.

Nor does it here belong to us to relate how Futtéh Khan Imad-ool-Moolk rose, from step to step; nothing opposed his advancement. The favorite of his first master, by his influence he became known at court, soon o'ertopped him in the struggle for distinction, became the friend of the minister, the virtuous Khwaja Mahmood, then governor of Berar, and now its king!

And hath this power brought happiness to the king, to him who was once a menial where he now reigns? Alas, no!—alas, for unchecked ambition, so insatiable as it hath ever proved! when doth it suffer its victims to rest? Doth it not ever urge them on to fierce encounters with their fellows, to rude collisions with the world, severing the kindest ties which bind them to their species?—and when their affections plead for aught upon which they have rested for a while, ever finding a new object of pursuit, a new phantom—to be chased only to be lost—to be again succeeded by another, equally unsubstantial and fleeting!

It is even thus with the king. On whom, of all the inmates of his Mahal, hath his affections ever rested? There are beauties of Irān, of Room, of Hind; a choice bed of flowers, from among which, when it pleaseth him, he plucketh one to rest in his bosom for a while, to be cast aside when her freshness hath faded upon his senses.

Yet there is one upon whom his sincere regard hath ever rested; one who is in a lowly rank as yet, among his servants, and yet in none of whom he hath more confidence. In Azim Khan he has found no guile, no deceit, and he has watched him narrowly from his very boyhood; he keeps him near his person, lest in the corrupt society of the court he should become contaminated; and if there is one being in the world for whom he cherishes aught of love, it is Azim Khan, his brave, his devoted attendant.

Ay! he was both: and when the king felt how desolate his own heart was, and knew that had he been early linked to one whom he might have loved, his affections might have found an early and abiding resting place, he busied himself to find a meet partner for his favorite; and it was soon told to him how beautiful was Shireen, the only daughter of one of his physicians,—and they were married.

Unlike to the custom of western nations, they had had no previous intercourse with each other, but was their love the less for this? Oh, no! single hearted, at once their affections rested upon each other, and they loved with that intensity of passion which, when it exists in the East, absorbs every other faculty, and will brook no control or interruption.

It is the hour of the second watch of the night, and Azim Khan arises from beside Shireen to go to his post, but not with his usual alacrity and confidence; his step is slow and irresolute, his eye is downcast and heavy.

Hark! gentle tones are breaking the silence—she will not suffer him to depart thus—she is speaking, and imploring him to listen.

“Most dear! oh, soul of my life!” she murmurs as she clings to him, “why is this moody spirit? Why are my lord’s eyes cast down, and his soul heavy? Tell me, tell Shireen, than whom, thou knowest, none is so dear to thee, or so trusted. Hath the king angered thee?—hath he——?”

“No, my pearl! my loveliest! breathe not a word against my kind, my bountiful master. Have we not all we can desire?—and shall I, or thou, have aught to say against him?”

“Then why, Azim,” she answers, “is this conduct?—it is not thy wont. Thou hast fought beside the king, and in many a weary night hast watched him, lest his enemies should steal upon his slumbers and destroy him. Dost thou suspect aught of danger to thyself or him? Let me share it,

if there is. Surely I will accompany thee—it is but a step, and this dark wrapper will disguise me wholly.”

“No, no, Shireen; this must not be! Excited I am, but the cause I cannot reveal to thee; no mortal knoweth it yet, and shall I, for a vague suspicion, breathe aught, even to thee, against him?”

“Then it is the king!—My life! my life! what can this be? Brave I know thou art; thine own deeds speak for this; thou wouldst not be thus without cause. What dost thou dread to hear,—to see,—and thou so close to him as thou wilt be ere long?”

“Much, much, my life!”—and he shuddered—“but it must be done. I dare not desert my post. And yet”—he mutters to himself—“to choose me always for this hour on this day. What meaneth it? But comfort thee my Shireen, it is but for one watch and what I dread may not be. Do not remove the carpet from hence. The air is cool, and the moon bright, and I shall love to calm myself by gazing upon this face of loveliness, and to drink in the intoxication of thine eyes, till I am wrapt in slumber. I go: may the prophet keep thee! Behold, I return even now. I will awake thee with a caress, and thou wilt say, ‘thou hast but just left me, Azim, is thy watch so soon over?’”

She could not reply; she had never known dread of aught, she was so guileless in her nature; but there was a vague, indefinite feeling at her heart—an aching, a restlessness,—which, when she lay down to rest, prevented her from sleeping. In vain was it that she practised every means she could devise, to ’tice sleep to her eyelids—it came not.

She arose—she went out into the glorious moonlight, and, from the edge of her terrace, gazed towards the quarter of the palace where she knew her lord was gone. All was quite still. All the living things she saw were two forms sitting

together upon a distant terrace of the palace. She watched them vaguely for a time, speculating idly upon their converse, and again turned away to her carpet; but it was useless,—she was low and oppressed with fears, she knew not why.

“I cannot shake it off,” she says to herself, “and until his return I cannot sleep; my hookah will be a solace to me, and will compose me. And I will ask a solution of this, to me a mystery, from old Muriam, who was long in the palace. It may be she knows why the king should have aught of concern in my Azim’s melancholy.”

She roused the woman, who slept in an ante-chamber; the hookah was soon prepared, and Shireen requested her nurse to stay and beguile the dull hours that must elapse before her lord’s return, by relating some tale which should turn her thoughts away from him.

The old nurse’s tale was soon done; it had made but little impression upon Shireen, for her thoughts were with her Azim. The time of his watch had half elapsed, it had seemed interminable; the other half to come appeared worse in prospect. There was a dead silence,—only broken by the monotonous bubble of the hookah as she inhaled the smoke from time to time, when thought gave her a temporary respite; or else she sat silently, her eyes fixed upon vacancy.

“What hath come to thee, my precious rose, this night?” said the woman, who was as much a counsellor as a servant. “What will thy lord—may the blessed Imams keep him safely!—what will he think of this dulness when he returns? Or is it for him, perchance, thou sighest? Cheer thee, my jessamine! it is past midnight, and he will not be absent more than an hour now. Why art thou so downcast?”

When the heart is full nigh unto bursting, and one has long endeavoured to repress feelings, whether of joy or sorrow,

it matters not which:—a single word,—one touch on the chord which is stretched, causes a vibration, which, though it may last but for an instant, is such exquisite pain that nature can supply but one remedy—tears—and it is always effectual.

Shireen had little excuse for hers: no one need excuse tears, for they are blessed things, whether of joy, or sorrow, or repentance; they are the only relief to an over-charged spirit, the only vent for feelings too painful to be borne. And hers flowed silently; but at last she rallied herself.

“This is very weakness, nurse,” she said, looking up and smoothing back the hair from her bright forehead, “if you were to ask me why I wept, I could not tell you, save that he is not with me, and yet——”

“Why yet—my daffodil! why hast thou wept? Let me take the evil off thy sweet head.”

The nurse rose, and advancing, leaned over Shireen, and as she bowed her head, drew her hands over her, and pressed the backs of them against her own temples. This she repeated thrice, as the charm against all evil.

“And what didst thou mean by saying, ‘and yet,’ my rose?—what wouldst thou have said, or asked?”

“’Twas nothing, nurse—nothing of consequence—only——”

“‘And yet,’ ‘only,’ ‘and yet nothing.’ Ah, my child! I have lived too long for that guileless heart to conceal aught from me. Something there must be that oppresses thee:—Tell me, hath he changed to thee?—hath he spoken ill——”

To me—Azim changed to me? Ah, nurse, I said not so. Is he not ever kind, ever full of love?”

And she looked up so brightly, so confidently, and she said it so full of hope and joy, that the old woman’s heart was touched too; and one might have seen, had there been light, a tear trickling down her furrowed cheek, haply the effect of some sudden reminiscence, haply only the joy of

seeing a bright smile upon the beautiful countenance of her youthful mistress, when so lately it had been overcast.

But the smile did not long linger there; again her head was bent down, and she sighed deeply.

"There is no use concealing aught from me," said Muriam, "confide the subject of that sigh to me, and it will be hard if I find no relief for it."

And she did so. After much persuading, she told all she suspected, which was drank in by the old woman with the utmost avidity; and, the eagerness with which she from time to time, asked questions of the young creature beside her, showed that she was far from indifferent to the subject.

"So, he mentioned no particulars," said Muriam, at last: "he would not tell you what he had seen or heard?"

"Nothing, nurse, nothing! He went away, but melancholy sat upon his features; and, alas, for me! I have no joy in my heart until he is safe with me again."

"Strange!" said the old woman, musing aloud, "most strange! Thrice have I heard these things said of the king. Friday too, and the third change of the moon. They say, in such a night, those who are permitted, see strange beings; and those who can control them make strange uses of them; and—Holy Prophet! what has come to thee, my ruby!—why dost thou gaze so wildly?"

"Thou hast said it," said Shireen, gasping, "he—my lord—he hath known the spirits of the air:—he hath seen them—he is gone to them now. What if they bear him away with them—my beautiful one—how should I ever live more?" And the poor girl crouched to the ground, drew her muslin scarf tightly around her, and shivered in the very agony of her apprehension.

In vain was it that her nurse attempted to soothe her, her own fears and superstitious terrors were excited, and the more

she thought on the subject, the more they possessed her mind. They drew closer to each other, listening to every sound: the very whispers of the night wind among the leaves above them, and each flickering glance of light through them, caused their flesh to creep, and their apprehensions to increase.

CHAPTER II.

And where now, is Azim? Bold and true of heart, nothing can daunt him: what he hath heard before he hath not breathed to mortal ear; and this is the night when, though it had been but little, it was to be renewed. "The next Friday, on which the third change of the moon falls, I will return," said the voice. How well he remembered the hollow thrilling tones. Some months have elapsed since this was, and he has been anticipating the day with weary expectation, and vainly hoping that his turn would not lead him to the watch that night. But the king has sought him out, and commanded him to be at his post on the middle watch, because he trusted him more than others. To another, this would have been an ordinary command, but not so to Azim.

The event of the night before, the peculiar tone of the king's voice as he gave the order in private, the selection of him above all the rest for the duty, the injunctions and threats to secrecy—all these preyed upon him continually in some degree, and so long as he remained with Shireen he was oppressed even to sickness of heart. He longed to tell her all, for in spite of his utmost efforts to repress it, a thought would arise, that something might result from the matter into which he was about to plunge, which would separate him from her for ever. And this thought was agony—so keen, so poignant, that he had a sore struggle to repress his feelings, and dared not trust him-

self to speak to her, lest he should betray all, and forfeit the trust which had been reposed in him.

But once gone from her presence, his trusty sword girded tightly to his waist, his good shield hanging loosely from his arm, and his dagger ready in his girdle: he felt, as every brave man does, a knitting of his energies to the purpose required of them, a confidence in himself and his weapons, and he threw out his chest, looked proudly and confidently around him, and stepped on quickly to the palace.

* * * * *

Lonely and abstracted in his habits, it was not the king's wont to pass his nights in his Zenana; there was one small room apart from it, where he usually slept, and to which Azim is now proceeding, for there is his post; and well he knows that no mortal can enter it save by his leave, or if he falls, over his body.

He has reached the spot,—he finds his fellow-servant at his post, waiting for him,—short greeting passes between them, for Mahamed is weary; sleep sits heavy upon his eyelids, and he has long looked for the coming of Azim to relieve him of his watch. A few words, hardly above their breath, are interchanged, and soon the light steps of Mahamed are heard far away in the distant corridors.

Azim Khan is alone—there is but a small lamp burning in a niche, which only serves to show the greater gloom beyond its influence; at a short distance is the door of the king's apartment, and all is still within it. Now he has no fear: he has loosened his sword in its sheath, and his shield is on his arm. Come what may, he is watchful and ready.

“The king sleeps soundly to-night,” thought Azim, after a long period, “and how false were my alarms, not only to myself but to Shireen. Still there are four long hours to the third watch; would that they were over, and I had returned.”

Would that they were, indeed ! As he speaks, the door of his apartment opens slowly, and if a flush—a sudden thrill of his blood runs through his body—it is to be pardoned, for it is not from fear, it is only the consequence of his previous thoughts ; a glance has reassured him, and he is calm as ever.

It is the tall form of the king which comes forth, and, descending the steps, the monarch approaches him.

“ Is that thou, Azim ? Hast thou been long here ? ”

“ My lord, I have been on watch an hour or more. ”

“ Nay, hardly that, Azim, 'tis not yet midnight. Hast thou seen aught ? ”

“ Protector of the poor, nothing ! ”

“ Thou hast ever been faithful to me, and I have loved thee as my child, Azim. Thou wilt be sorely tried to-night. I fear me thy young heart will hardly support thee here in this loneliness—thou wilt fear. ”

“ Fear ! my noble master, have I ever feared ? ”

“ I know thou wouldst fear nothing mortal, Azim, but—if—if—thou hearest voices, fear not ; they will depart. They will come to me, Azim ; I dare not to forbid them, ” continued the king, sinking his voice to a whisper, “ they are necessary to my existence. To-night, many will come—many. I fear them not :—but thou, poor boy ! I dread for thee. Knowest thou the penalty of one of mortal birth looking on ‘ them of the air,’ without he have the power to call them ? ”

“ I have heard it, ” replies Azim, “ but I know not whether if it be true. ”

“ What hast thou heard ? ”

“ Blindness, certain blindness ; while he that is struck forgetteth, too, what he hath seen. ”

“ Ay, that is it ; they are too bright and glorious for mortal eyes to look on : but thou fearest not to hear them, Azim ? To hear them, and not to see them, ” continues the king,

musings, "to know they are not of this earth!—he has a brave spirit who would dare this without flinching. Yet thou must, Azim, but for once, and thou wilt earn a monarch's gratitude. Say, wilt thou be firm—darest thou?"

"Try me! only try me, my king!" cried Azim, prostrating himself upon the earth; "when they are gone come to me. If I am a man, I shall be here, as calm as I am now; if not, cast me from thee, to herd with the mean and despicable."

"I believe thee, Azim; fear never dwelt on features like thine—on a brow so open, and an eye so calm and flashing. I fear not for thee. I must be gone, for they will be here presently. As they arrive, thou wilt see the moon's rays flash through yonder aperture; then they will come, and thou wilt soon after hear them. But, beware of thy curiosity:—approach not the door, lest thy destiny be changed from its present brightness, to darkness—to death."

Azim could not reply, but he bowed his head on his folded arms, and the king passed onwards into his chamber.

CHAPTER III.

The aperture to which the king had pointed, became, after he had left him, an object of the deepest anxiety to Azim. His eyes remain fixed upon it—hardly for a moment has he removed them. How he thrills, as he expects the first stealing of the moonlight through it. He stirs not, but leans forward and gazes stedfastly and earnestly, scarcely breathing, so intent is he in watching.

And who would not be so in his situation?—the warnings—the cautions—he has received; the conduct of the king, and his positive assurances that they are coming,—they, the people of the air, the viewless and mysterious links between earth

and Heaven, of whom he has heard so much, who he knows to be so powerful, and so linked with the destinies of humanity.

There is no sound within: the king awaits their approach silently; but the strong perfume of incense which he is burning to purify the chamber for their reception, has already penetrated to Azim. And is he the less brave because, as the minutes pass, his breathing becomes more rapid, and the wild tumultuous beatings of his heart almost audible? Let a host of enemies appear on the instant, he will sell his life as a brave man ought, he will be hewed in pieces ere he suffers one of them to pass a step towards his monarch. Hush! what sound was that?

It is the gentle rushing of many wings, like the first sigh of the night wind as it arouses from its slumber, and heralding the dawn, kisses each tree and flower, as it awakes them to rejoice that a new day is about to burst upon them.

As he hears it, behold, like a meteor, the light has flashed through the aperture, and appears, as it rests upon the shaft of a pillar, as though it were a palpable body reaching across the apartment.

"They are come, surely, and yet how calmly," he says, "how different to what I had expected—there is nothing terrible in this. How silent they are too, if they are there. Shall I venture yonder—only within the apartment—that I may hear them speak, only for once, that the sounds may linger on my heart for ever? the blessed voices of those who daily see Heaven, and yet have no abiding place there. How glorious must it be to see them; yet I am denied this—I can but hear them—that was not forbidden."

And Azim Khan advances. Alas, for him! he has already forgotten his master's injunctions not to approach; a fatal curiosity is drawing him on; his destiny it is, that cannot be averted.

He steals along on tiptoe, his feet are bare, and you may not hear the smallest sound as he advances. He has gained the centre of the saloon, and the strong beam of moonlight rests upon his tall manly figure, glances from his steel cap and gauntlet, and from the bosses on his shield. He hesitates for a moment—does he bethink himself of the king's admonition? Ah, that it may be so—that he may return!

What is it that has thus arrested his steps?—and why does he stand so motionless in the bright light? He has heard the voices, the silvery voices of the spirits, and he is spell-bound. Not for worlds would he retire now; his blood is so pouring through his veins that he longs to see them, to gaze upon their glory. He would dare any thing for this, in defiance of the threats of the certainty of punishment.

Yes! there are many there. Their voices are not like those of men. Strange and unearthly they sound, and yet are inexpressibly sweet. Nothing on earth can imitate them, while mingled with them is the faint rushing sound he before heard—a rustling as it were of women's garments when they tread softly.

Alla! Alla! what new sound is there? It is not distinct, and comes to him in hollow dull tones, through the thick iron-bound door; it is agony that he cannot catch a word; he advances,—slowly,—stealthily; one stride, and the moonlight but lingers on part of his white dress; another, and he is lost in the darkness beyond.

A few paces brings him to the door, and, seating himself on the step, he applies his ear to the panel. For a long time all is silent save the rustling sounds, and the gentle liquid whisperings of the spirits. But hark! there is a voice. The king is speaking, and Azim Khan drinks in every word of his discourse.

“Why hast thou come unbidden, proud Spirit? Answer

me, by the spell I wear, by the armlet which binds thee to my service."

"Thou knowest it is my wont upon this day," was the reply; and the tones went to the soul of Azim. He well remembered them, though he had not heard them for so long.

"And these thy spirits, wherefore have they accompanied thee?"

"They are my servants; shouldst thou command, they are here to execute thy wishes. Dost thou require aught?"

"Much!" is the reply.

"Discontented mortal!" rejoins the Spirit, "what cravest thou? Hast thou not wealth? Hast thou not power, honor, fame?—Hast thou not armies,—a noble territory?"

"I have all these, O Spirit!"

"Hast thou not power over men's hearts—do not their souls follow thine whithersoever thou wouldst lead them? Thy wishes are scarcely known, ere they are complied with."

"True; and yet I lack much."

The Spirit laughed; and Azim could have shrunk into the earth at that laugh, so full of scorn—of loathing, was it.

"What requirest thou? thou knowest the spell thou holdest compels me to do thy bidding."

"Happiness," replied the monarch, "let it dwell in my heart, and I shall feel grateful to thee;" and he sighed. The Spirit laughed again. How fearfully shrill was that laugh.

"Happiness!" he repeats, in a tone of bitter scorn, "where am I to find that for thee? Behold, thou hast the means, wherefore art thou not happy?"

"I know not;" sighs the king, "but it comes not to me."

"Miserable mortal!" continues the Spirit, "what calleth thy species happiness? Ask the timid maiden when she first feels that she could love, when there is an aching void which she yearns to fill up in her heart, to have an image there to be

enshrined sacredly. She is wretched; she will hardly own her desire, and yet it will be that some youth should become the object of her adoration, and be hers for ever. This will be her fancied happiness, the treasure of her life. She possesses it—is she happy? Is there no jealousy, no fear, no dread of losing it? no constant watchfulness over it, no agony when she is put aside for another? Thyself shall give the answer. Is the possession of her dearest object, of the happiness she coveted real and perfect as she had hoped?”

“Alas! it is not, O Spirit!”

“Ask, then, the youth—the fiery youth—who, in a vain thirst for something he cannot define, is wasting his energies in chasing empty shadows, aspiring to honors, to advancement, to glory. What doth he desire—beauty? give it him and it soon palls upon his senses till he flings it aside as tasteless and cloying. Honors? he still desireth more, and his life is full of envy at the fortune of others. Advancement? Ambition will never allow him to be satisfied; the wild cravings of his own heart cannot be stilled. Give him armies, kingdoms, the world itself, does happiness follow? It is thine own case, monarch, answer!”

“It comes not to me, O Spirit!”

“Alas! where then, am I to find it for thee? It exists not upon the wide earth, or I would bring it to thee. If thou canst but breathe a thought where it is, behold I go to seek it. Oh, monarch! ye all cry for happiness, and curse your destinies that it comes not to ye, but only suffer that blessed thing content to dwell in your hearts, and your wretched, striving species would not look elsewhere for it!”

“Thou speakest truly,” said the king, “and yet thou seest that I am lonely and wretched. The constant dread of being plunged from my height of pride into the lowest insignificance, causes a perpetual anxiety, which preys upon me.”

"Yet thou art miserable now; in what doth thy power aid thee?"

"Am I not a king? Have I not power?"

"Yet thou ownest thou art not happy with it, so much as thou used to yearn for it." And again the Spirit laughed his wild unearthly laugh, which rang through the vaulted roof and fretted ceiling of the apartment.

"Power I have, proud and scornful Spirit—but well thou knowest it is not lasting. The loss of this armlet, of the spell which thou gavest me, reduces me again to the level of a slave, and elevates its possessor to my seat. Is it not so, O Spirit? and canst thou wonder at my misery with this at stake, at the care which incessantly gnaws my vitals. False Spirit! was this to be the only issue of thy promises?"

"Thou art false to thyself," rejoins the being; "behold thou hast all thou hast ever desired, even in the moments of thy wildest ambition. 'Make me but a monarch!' thou used to cry, 'and I am content.' Art not thou one?"

"I am, but was my secret known—the secret which lies between me and thee only—were it known that in this armlet lies all my power, would not there be hourly plots to possess it? Give me but a remedy for this, and I shall be happy. Spirit, I command thee by the charm to do this."

"Fool!" answers the Spirit, "have I not often told thee it is impossible; cast the spell from thee if thou wilt, become a menial where thou hast ruled, and see if thou wilt be the happier. With the spell will depart the memory of thy kingdom, that misery will be spared thee. Choose!"

It was a moment of agonizing apprehension to Azim, and thoughts, aye, and temptations too, were crowding into his mind, becoming more and more distinct every moment. His mouth was dry and parched; you might almost have heard his tongue cleaving to the sides as he strove in vain to moisten it.

"Choose!" again cries the Spirit, "for the silence has become long and insupportable, wilt thou resign the spell?"

"Never, while I have life to wear it!"

The Spirit again laughed, and it seemed to be taken up by those above and around him. Oh, how fearful it sounded as it rung in scornful peals through the apartment in the stillness of the night!"

"Thou mockest me, Spirit."

"I do, monarch; and leave thee in thy misery!"

As these words were spoken, Azim arose and glided swiftly to his post. There was water there, and he raised the vessel to his lips, drank, and dashed some upon his face; it was well he did so, for it calmed him, and restored his self-possession. He had scarcely done it when the monarch's voice was heard, calling him in impatient yet anxious accents.

"Azim! Azim Khan! why delayest thou? Slave, dost sleep?"

"Asylum of the world, I come—behold I am with you;" and Azim bounded across the apartment as the king opened the door, and the light streamed into it.

How haggard and wild he looked! despair sat on his features, and his eyes were staring: had Azim not known the cause, he had been terrified at the monarch's appearance.

"Heard'st thou aught, Azim?" he asks in hurried and anxious accents, "Did'st thou see aught?"

"I, my lord?"

"Ay, thou! heard'st thou aught?"

"I heard nothing, my lord, save the sighs of the night wind; it has arisen even now, and rustles among the leaves."

"Nothing more? Thou heard'st no laughter—no voices?"

"Laughter!—protector of the poor?"

"Ay, laughter; why dost thou re-echo my words? Slave, dost thou too mock me?"

"My lord, has thy slave the power—dare he do so?"

"Then thou heard'st nothing, Azim?"

"Nothing."

"'Tis most strange! then their voices are unsubstantial as their forms, aye, and their forms as the gifts they force upon those who command their favors. What mockery! Azim, come to me, sit thee here—nay, I will take no denial—thy presence is far, far better than his. But tell me, heard'st thou no sound since I left thee—no voices? Swear to me thou heard'st none."

"None; surely had I heard them, I would have told my lord."

The king rubbed his eyes. "Have I not then been sleeping, and this has been some horrid dream? Ah, no, no! even now the hideous laughter rings in mine ears, and his last words, Azim, 'I leave thee in thy misery,' are too distinct ever to be forgotten. They have been with me, Azim, those fearful spirits, they have lured me on to a giddy height, and left me, that my next step may precipitate me headlong into misery."

"Now may Alla and the holy Prophet forbid! My lord has been sleeping, and how often do the dreams of sleep take as fast hold of the imagination as the events of reality?"

But Azim knew too well that what the monarch said was reality, for had he not heard all? but deceit had entered into him from the moment of his first denial, and in a few moments more, a few only, his nature was changed to his king.

They were alone.—The demon within him tugged hard at his heart, and urged him to be king. One blow of his good sword, one thrust of his dagger, and Futtéh Khan Imād-ool-Moolk was no more, and Azim Khan reigned in his stead. Ay, he was sorely tempted, yet the memory of many benefits rose up in his heart, and stilled these thoughts.

The king, wearied by excitement, lay down on his carpet and

composed himself to rest. Again they rushed tumultuously through Azim's heart, as he looked so defenceless, but once more with a mighty struggle, they were put back; a third time they might not have been denied, but the king dismissed him to his post, and rising, closed and fastened the door, as was his wont.

We will not follow Azim Khan there, for there is nothing inviting in withdrawing a veil from one so sorely tempted as he is.

CHAPTER IV.

Several days have elapsed, but Azim hath had little enjoyment of them; fierce thoughts are in his soul, wild visions of kingly power, of leading armies to battle, of subverting nations, of joining all under one faith, one law, one king, and that is himself. Wild unprofitable speculations, which lead to no end but to constant devisings how he may get possession of the armlet, to constant struggles between ambition and duty to his monarch. Shireen too is wretched: though he made light of her fears, and for a few days after the night we have first mentioned she felt her spirit to be as light as ever, yet by degrees darkness has crept upon it, the darkness caused by knowing that she hath no longer the sole place in his thoughts, that something else is there which causes him to be moody and abstracted; impatient too, and often harsh to her to whom he never before said a word which could give her a moment's pain.

"Ah! why is he so changed?" she often murmurs, "it is not his nature, it must be the influence of some spell, which may be removed by offerings and prayers at the shrines of the saints." She visits the tomb of the holy Rhymān Shah Doola without the city; she offers up her prayers there, and vows

rich offerings to it if they are answered, but all is of no avail, the glory of her love is departed.

She often appeals to her nurse to devise cause for this strangeness: and the old woman shakes her head, and persists that it is caused by the spirits with whom he has had intercourse. But he denies this; and one denial of his is worth to her, a thousand conjectures, such faith hath she in him.

Perhaps a week has elapsed since the night first spoken of. The place is the same, and the time. The air is balmy and serene, and Azim and Shireen prefer lying under their leafy canopy, though the moon no longer shines upon them, to remaining in their close apartment. To-night he is fond and affectionate as ever; and as he caresses her, and she suffers him to cast loose the knot which confines her hair, to run his fingers through it, and dispose it about her face as his fancy strikes him—while his words are sweet to her ears and ravishing to her senses—she thinks that her days of peace are returned, that he is not changed: and she blames herself that her heart should ever have given place to a thought so wrongful of him, as that aught divided his affection with her. A sudden thought of this kind has struck her at some fresh endearing token of love, for she has buried her head in his breast, and looks up at times so eloquently, and yet half reproachfully, that he feels it to be a reproof, and straining her to his heart, deplores that he should ever have caused her a moment's pain: and her beauty is so great, so surpassing, that he exclaims involuntarily—

“Thou should'st have been a queen, dearest, the proudest monarch might wear a jewel like thee near his heart, and be proud of it.”

“Ay, wert thou a king,” she says, “not else, Azim.”

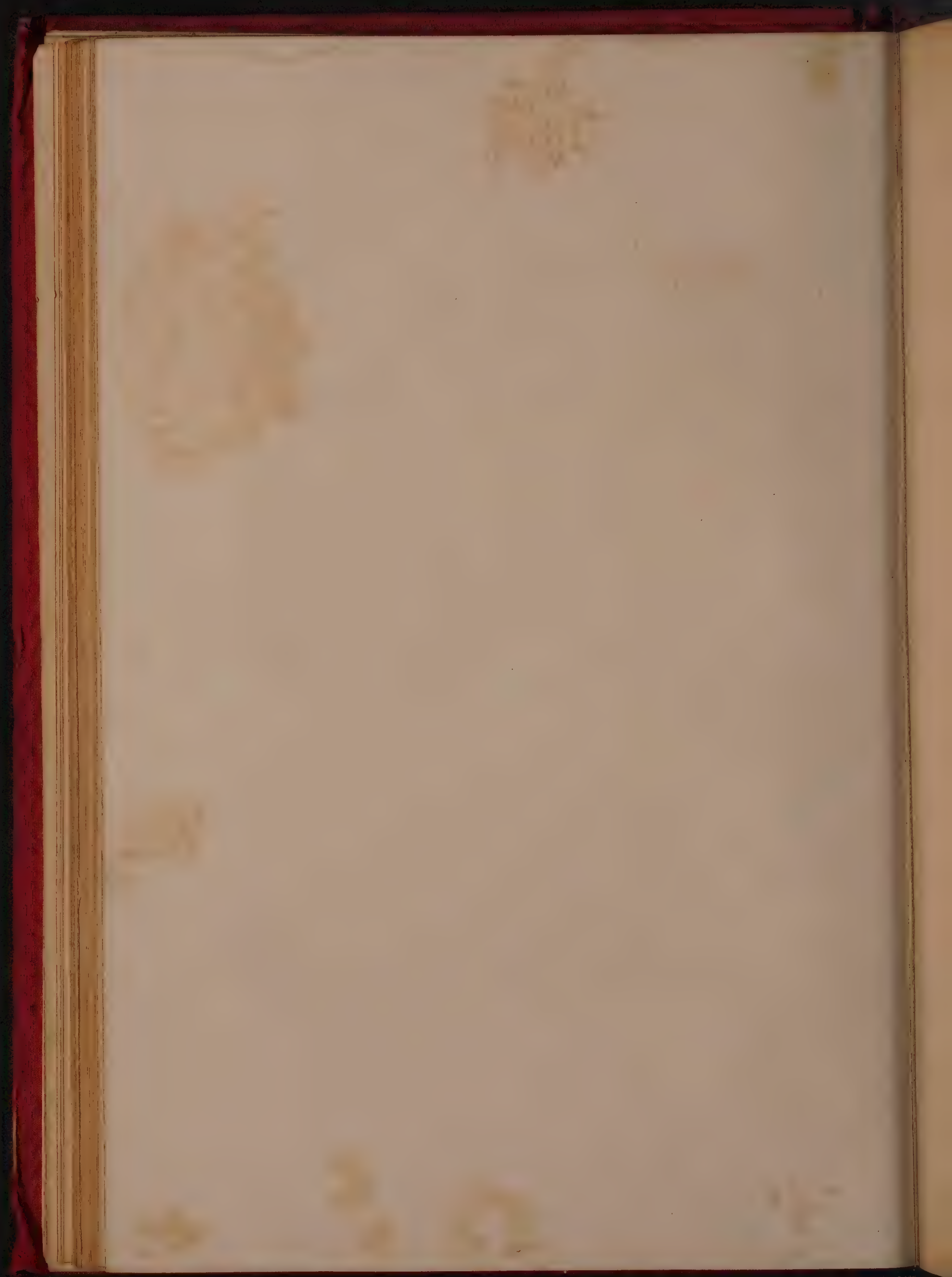
She has touched the chord—unwittingly she has touched it—and his whole frame vibrates to it. He starts, and gazes at



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her, as though the tempter were beside him, and not his own Shireen."

"May the Prophet shield thee!" she exclaims, "what made thee start so, Azim? Art thou in pain?"

"For an instant I was—here, dearest," and he pointed to his heart; "'twas but a spasm, and it is gone already; see, I am calm again. But what sayest thou," he continued cheerfully, "should'st thou like to be a queen? to have slaves at thy command, all that a kingdom could produce for thee, palaces, gardens, wherein thou could'st rove?"

"Ay, my lord, so thou wert king."

"Would'st thou I were a king, Shireen?"

"Would'st thou be happier, Azim?"

"Nay, thou dost not answer; tell me, fairest."

"I would then, so thou wert happy with thy kingdom; for then we should have wealth, and how many persons could we not make happy like ourselves, and how many comforts should we not possess which we are now denied? Thou delightest in horses, Azim; thou would'st have noble ones, and elephants; thou would'st have gallant hearts about thee too, noble spirits like thyself; men, of whom poets should sing, and maidens dream in their sleep; but none so beautiful—none like my Azim: and my heart would swell at the thought, that for all these there would be no one like unto poor Shireen in thine estimation. Would it not be so? Then thy subjects would love thee—who could help loving thee?—But, ah!" sighed Shireen, "thou knowest this is but a dream, that it can never be."

But Azim thinks otherwise; he knows that such might be could he only possess himself of the spell which had raised Futtéh Khan to sovereignty. He glows to think how his beloved Shireen will share the pomp of his court, the glories of war, the excitement of the chase, as eagerly almost as himself. Are not such thoughts as these enough to madden him? Can it be wondered at that he should feel excited? that his present

existence should be distasteful to him, with so glorious a reality almost within his grasp? Since he has spoken, he has lain in a kind of trance, her hand in his—his eyes are shut, but before his mental vision are rapidly passing gorgeous spectacles, in which he is the principal actor; processions, huntings, camps, battles, noble horses, elephants. He is determined, for his visions have been unusually bright, and he fancies that they have been sent by his destiny to lead him on.

Alas! they are but the lamps of the Spirit of the Waste—the *ignes fatui* that are leading him on to destruction!

But he turns to Shireen—"Thou hast said it, my rose; when thou art queen thou shalt have all these and more; there will be nothing thou canst desire that thy Azim will not provide for thee; rich jewels, costly garments, the fairest slaves, the most noble elephants—all, and more shall be thine, and we will be so happy then, for we shall have the means of doing good and making the world around us happy too."

"Thou drawest a bright picture," says Shireen, "and almost as if it were to be. Well, bright dreams are pleasant, whether we sleep or wake; but thou knowest these are but dreams, dearest:" and she laughed—that light merry laugh of girlhood, which had no care, no guile in it. But Azim heeded not her remark, for visions were again crowding into his heart so fast, that though her words fell upon his ear, he could not have repeated them a moment afterwards, and he became once more absorbed in his reflections.

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The king is in his bath. How gorgeous is the interior, and yet how pure and beautiful! There are two rooms; the one a saloon, the other the bath where the king now is. Let us look around us. The room is octagonal, from the angles spring light and many shafted pillars, which if you follow, the eye is led into a maze of the most delicate arches and fretwork, which forms the ceiling; so intricate that you can hardly follow it, and

yet so beautiful, that the whole appears perfectly symmetrical. The ceiling is of the whitest stucco, rivalling marble in purity and polish, and the walls also half way up. The lower half is of marble, the purest that could be found; carved with the most exquisite skill into florid arabesques, and here and there a sentence of the blessed Koran is inlaid in black letters.

The floor is of marble, also white, inlaid with divers rare colored stones, in mosaics of flowers and other quaint devices; and in the middle is a tiny fountain, that sends up a thin column of water to the very roof, which falls back into it in spray, and imparts a refreshing coolness to the air of the apartment. Persian carpets of the most luxurious softness, each one furnished with a large soft velvet pillow, and one or two hookahs, of gorgeous magnificence, are placed at intervals. The whole is exquisitely pure and clean, and the dim light which is admitted, invites to luxurious repose and contemplation.

Within is the monarch; a screen of cloth shuts out the interior of the bath from our sight, but it is of pure white marble, roof, and walls, and floor, and all are carved in flowers and delicate patterns, designed and executed by the rarest artists. From one side, water heated to the usual liking of the king, falls slowly down an inclined marble slab, the surface of which is carved to imitate shells, and over which it always flows with a gentle murmur, and falls into a basin below.

The king has finished bathing, and comes forth into the saloon where Azim Khan awaits him, for he has been guarding the spot where his monarch was for the time so defenceless; he is about to retire, but the king motions to him to be seated, for he has ever a kind word for Azim since that night, and admits him to a friendly intercourse which he allows to no other. They have sat for some time conversing, for the king is well skilled in the Persian tongue, as also is Azim, and the theme is their favorite poets. But a messenger comes at last, and the king is summoned away to the hall of audience for a

while; he bids Azim wait for him, to finish the perusal of a portion of Firdousi in which he was engaged.

After reading awhile to himself, Azim Khan arises and wanders about the chamber. "Ah!" he sighs, "would this were mine; what a retreat it would be from the glare of the noon-day sun, and with Shireen, how delightfully the hours would pass!" He wanders listlessly into the bath, and examines its exquisite proportions and carved ornaments, and it is so beautifully finished that he hardly sees the joints of the marble slabs, and the whole looks as one piece.

Merciful Prophet! what doth he see?—what lieth there brightly glittering, as the rays of light fall upon its surface? An armlet—and it is the king's! What if it should be the one he has so often coveted—that of which the Spirit spoke—the one which will at once cause him to be monarch. Holy Prophet retain his senses—how his heart beats! He hesitates for a moment to take it up. Look, he stands irresolute; but his features are working with excitement. Away! Azim Khan, away! touch it not! there is death in the touch.

Alas! he heeds not, his destiny urges him, he stretches out his arm. Holy Alla! he has it now, and clutches it to his heart. How suddenly his features change. How his eyes are rolling, how wild he looks!

Hark to him, he calls aloud, "Mahamed, Mahamed! vile slave, where art thou? Why dost thou not answer?"

"Why, Azim Khan—brother"—cries Mahamed as he enters, "what has possessed thee? Art mad, or hast thou eaten opium? this is very foolishness."

"I will teach thee to call it that," returns Azim, passionately; "go slave, and bring my hookah into the hall of audience, it pleaseth me to sit there and do judgment."

"He is mad," exclaims Mahamed, as the unfortunate Azim passes on, under the strong working of the spell, "he is quite mad; I must try him again more gently. Azim, my brother,"

he says, in a soothing tone, "tell me what has possessed thee? lie down and sleep here. I will tell the king that thou art ill.

But this infuriates still more the unhappy youth—"Base son of a vile mother! dog, and son of a dog, darest thou speak thus to thy prince? Away! send my attendants. By Alla! if thou speakest again to me, thou shalt be beheaded instantly. See that my bidding is done, ere I pass on into the zenana."

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The king is in his dewan khana, his hall of audience; it is a gorgeous room, covered with gilding, supported upon wooden arches, the pillars of which run up to the groined roof in light columns, and are richly carved. A splendid carpet is upon the floor, but where the monarch sits it is covered with pure white muslin. Around him are his officers of state, of justice, of revenue, of his army; for he conducts the affairs of his kingdom himself; none hath yet ruled Berar like Futtéh Khan Imād-ool-Moolk.

Who is this that rushes breathless into the assembly, disturbing the grave deliberations of the councillors? Wild with fear is he, his eyes are staring, and he can hardly speak.

"Punah-i-khoda! protection of God," cries the monarch, "what doth this mean? Mahamed, what hath happened? Speak, slave, why dost thou look so terrified?"

"Asylum of the world!" cries Mahamed, in broken accents, "I beg to represent—may I be pardoned for insolence—for Alla help me, but it is true——"

"Speak, dog!" cries the king impatiently, "what folly is this? Fear not, but speak coherently."

"A-A-Azim Khan, most powerful!"—stammers out the servant.

"Azim Khan!" exclaims the monarch, starting to his feet, "what of him? Speak, if thou would'st not be beaten!"

"Light of the earth, he is gone mad! He says he is the king, he has reviled you, knows not whom you are, has beaten

me with his slipper, and I am disgraced; he is very fearful to look on."

"Where is he, Mahamed?"

"In your bath, O monarch!"

"Ha!" cries the monarch, feeling upon his arm, "have I been so careless? Follow me, Mahamed!" and seizing his sword, and forbidding any one else to accompany him, the king rushes from the hall.

"It will obey the master spirit—the lesser will obey the greater"—says the king, as he strides away; "it surely will, and what if it should not?—Alla! Alla! what if it should not.—Can we kill him, Mahamed and I? He is a base coward, and would fly from a look of Azim's now that he is excited—I well remember its effect upon myself. Holy Prophet aid me! mine own favorite too, for whom I would—but no matter, all is past now. He or I! He or I!" Uttering such broken words, the king rapidly traverses the corridors; he has reached the bath; and there, reclining upon a carpet, lies Azim Khan.

"Base slaves!" he cries, as they approach him, "am I less than a dog, that ye treat me thus? have I no respect in your eyes? Sons of defiled mothers, away, bring me wine!"

But see, he is hushed. The lesser spirit quails before the greater, as the king rubs the jewel he holds in his hand. Azim's is but the lesser. He is changed upon the instant, and has assumed his usual wont; but he is confused and unsteady in his gait, the effect of the excitement.

"Azim Khan," asks the king, mildly, "hast thou removed my clothes?"

"I have, my lord."

"Didst thou find any thing among them?"

"Khodawund, I did—an armlet, here it is?"

"Return it to me then, I do not like that it should be out of my possession;" and as he receives it, he blesses Alla that he has it again.

"Yet I must prove him," mutters the king, "he may know the rest; he will not answer but through the charm!" He gives the armlet again to Azim, and wonderful is the instant effect.

"Dog!" he cries to the king, "hast thou not brought my hookah, wilt thou not obey me?"

But the wild spirit is soon quelled within him, the king mutters a few words of Arabic as he rubs the jewel, and Azim is once more quiet.

"Answer me, spirit," says the king, "through yonder mortal, did he know of thy coming in the third Friday of the month?"

And Azim answers—he cannot help it, for the spirit within him urges him even to his own destruction—

"I did; I knew it all."

"And why was he permitted to listen?"

"It was my destiny!" shouted Azim: and the Spirit within him laughed scornfully—and those of the air took it up, and the fretted roof re-echoed the unearthly sounds—"It was my destiny!"

"Enough! enough!" mutters the monarch. "There is but one remedy, and it must be speedy." He rubs the spell again, and Azim Khan is once more calmed; but one may remark a guiltiness, a consciousness of deceit in him, which he strives in vain to disguise. "Twice cheated," he says to himself, "one more chance, and it shall not be so again."

"Thou art ill, Azim," says the king, gently, "the possession of that armlet hath unsettled thy brain. There is but one remedy, which I alone can prepare for thee;" and calling to Mahamed, he demands his gold drinking cup, while Azim stands silently.

It is brought, and water also, and the king, taking a ring from his finger, breathes upon it, and pours some water over it into the goblet, repeating while he does this, some mystic words. This done, he presents the cup to Azim Khan. "Drink," he says, "that thou mayest forget."

"B'ism-illa-hir-rahman ir-raheem. In the name of the most clement and merciful, were it poison I would drink it from thy hand, oh, king!" He swallows its contents, and in an instant sinks upon the ground in stupor: he is not dead for he breathes.

"Now!" cries the king to Mahamed, "quick, why dost thou loiter? take up the body and follow me."

Mahamed obeys, and follows until he stops at an unfinished niche in a part of the palace which is under repair, and having additions made to it.

"Lay him down here," says the king, "and run, bring hither one of the masons. Quick! or I will have thee trampled to death by an elephant."

Mahamed speeds to where the workmen are, and seizing one of them, he drags him in, in spite of his resistance.

"Now you and I must hold him up;" exclaims the king; "while do thou," he continues to the mason, "ply thy trade quickly. There are bricks and mortar—dispatch! else thou shalt be trampled to death."

The man knows the power of the speaker too well to disobey. Materials are at hand, and layer after layer of bricks, two thick, rise rapidly under his skilful hand; and soon the fatal wall reaches above the chest of the miserable Azim.

They no longer support the victim, but stand gazing at the work in silence. Mahamed cannot move a limb; he stares at the scene wildly, and as one fascinated.

"Will he revive?" he asks in a husky voice of the king, for he has hardly the power of speech.

"I know not," he replies, in a tone as harsh and grating as his own. "I have heard the draught prepared under the words I said is fatal; does he breathe still?"

Mahamed places his hand on the mouth of Azim. "He breathes! he is not dead!" he cries. "By your soul—by your hope of mercy—by your father's head—spare him! Ah, his

death will be horrible : and what hath he done ? He could not help it !”

“Peace, fool !” rejoins the monarch, “the secret must die with him !” Alas ! he has no mercy now, much as he has loved Azim ; that is past and forgotten in the dread of losing his kingdom. Only the eyes of the wretched Azim now remain uncovered ; two more layers of brick, and he will be closed in his narrow cell for ever.

“By Alla, he moves !” cries the king. “Quick, good mason—another row and he is safe.”

Ay, he moved surely ; the eyes of Azim Khan open to their full stare with a ghastly expression ; there is no life in them. The mason sees them, and, affrighted, lets fall his trowel.

“Why dost thou stop, knave ?” says the king, in a hoarse whisper. “Make haste, or by the holy prophet, I will drive my dagger into thy heart !”

But the man moves not, he is paralyzed by fear, and the king pricks him with his dagger till the blood flows freely.

“Do not kill me ! oh, do not kill me ! merciful monarch ! I will do the work—I should have done it ere now, but the body opened its eyes, and I——”

“Then do not be such a fool again !” he exclaims interrupting him, “dost thou fear the dead ?—a few more bricks and thou hast earned a reward for life.”

The man plies his work again, and the eyes are all but covered up, when, Ya Alla ! they again open.

“Thou hast served me that trick once before,” cries the mason angrily, “but I know better now. There,” and he places a brick across the eyes ; “that will prevent thy looking again ; and this is for alarming me,” and—oh, misery ! he strikes the sufferer upon the head with his trowel.

Alas ! it rouses the poor wretch from his trance. Alla ! Alla ! how piercing are his shrieks, and how frantic his efforts to release himself from his horrible situation ; how he implores

the king to release him, and how he calls upon his beloved Shireen in piteous accents. But they have stony hearts who hear him, and they open not to his calls for mercy; besides, it is his destiny, who dare to avert it?

The king cries to Mahamed to hold him down, and he urges the mason constantly with his dagger, now threatening, now promising increased rewards; but he does his work tremblingly, and the struggles of the poor creature within, become more and more frantic as the light closes upon him for ever. He has even got one hand above his head. Alla! Alla! aid him now—will he escape?

Woe for him!—the king sees it, and with his heavy knife deals the hand which is pushing away the bricks so hard a blow, that the tendons of the wrist are divided, and it falls powerless. Azim gazes piteously upon it, and upon the king, but it is soon finished now. The mason has gained fresh courage, and in a few moments the light has closed on Azim for ever. But his screams are still heard through the wall, and the beloved name of Shireen is the last upon his lips.

“Come away! come away!” cries the king, impatiently, as the others still linger. “Are your hearts hard, that ye listen. Away! had not that fool dallied over his work there would have been no noise, the effect would have lasted. It was a fearful necessity,” he murmurs to himself, “but he, or I, must have died. And yet that such a fate should have fallen upon *him*. —Ya Alla! how inscrutable are thy decrees!”

* * * * *

The monarch has returned to his hall, and is again surrounded by his ministers. A moody silence sits on his brow; and who, of all that company, dare question him as to the cause?—who dare say to him, “Monarch, where is Azim?”

Ay, days, and weeks, and months pass, and he comes not. There are dark surmises as to his fate, but no one knoweth it save the monarch, for the cold earth covers the others also;

the secrets of kings can alone live in their own hearts, who may be trusted with them. Men darkly hint at their fate, but dare not give utterance to their ideas in words.

The monarch drags on his gloomy existence. Men say his nights are horrible, and those who share them with him, seldom speak of them but with shuddering. He eats opium to drown his sense of suffering, but it is of little avail. Men say, too, that the spirits often come and mock him, and that their wild scornful laughter is heard at night, resounding through the empty rooms and corridors.

And Shireen, what shall we tell of her? Shall we recount with painful fidelity, how she sat down and looked for the coming of her lord, of her beloved, her brave, her beautiful Azim? How her heart grew sick with apprehension; how hours, and days, and weeks passed, and he came not. How despair gradually settled into her tender mind,—her last hopes faded away—and the conviction that he was gone from her for ever, caused reason to abandon her seat, and to leave her a helpless, but a gentle maniac? Ah no! why lift the veil which time has cast over the sufferer? why speculate upon grief, so poignant, so vivid, so true as hers?

She wants for nothing, and it is her delight to sit out on the broad terrace at night when the moon is shining brightly, and hold imaginary conversations with her Azim in those soft, low, murmuring tones, in which she used to speak to him while he lay beside her. She believes that he is gone to join the spirits of the air; and as her nurse believes it too, she does not contradict her; and she thinks he hears her when she addresses him, that he is become one of those viewless beings which inhabit the air, and are ever hovering around those whom they have best loved on earth.

May she soon be released from her earthly troubles! His spirit will watch for hers; and as it quits her body, and darts away through the blue ether, his will rejoin it, and they will

fly up to those glorious regions where all the pain of their sojourn upon earth will pass away,—where are the undying joys of youth, and the bright houris of paradise to welcome them. Will they be refused admittance there? Oh, no! no! they have been too pure on earth to be denied.

Near the Durgah of Rhyman Shah Doola, close to the city of Ellichpoor, beside a gentle river, which is ever murmuring softly over its pebbly bed, there stands a small but elegant tomb among many others, which, by the sarcophagus within it, is evidently that of a woman. There used to be an old fakeer who lived hard by in a miserable hut made of boughs and reeds, and I have often seen him decking that tomb with flowers, as though it had been that of his own daughter, and constantly sweeping it, as though even the dead leaves should press heavily upon her who rested there.

The spot is so beautiful, so lonely, and peaceful, that it was a constant resort of mine; and whether in the fresh dewy coolness of morning, in the heat of noonday, or the mellow evening, I never failed to find new beauties there which had escaped me before. I loved to hear the call of the Muezzin to prayers, resound through the grove and among the old tombs; and to see, for it is still a favorite burial-place, the shrouded forms of women busied in decorating the tombs of those who were dear to them in life, with beautiful, yet frail memorials of love. So often as I came, the old fakeer was sweeping or decorating the tomb, and as he soon knew me by sight, and was grateful for the trifle I often flung to him, I asked a history of the dead—of her whose grave he tended.

“She was a maniac,” he said. “One on whom the hand of Alla lay heavily; but she is in paradise now,” he added, looking up reverently, “and the tomb is called the tomb of the maniac. Supplications put up here are always accepted, and there is many a maiden of the city whose prayers have been

offered here, that calamity may be averted from her, and that her love may be made happy."

"Then there is a story, Sein; will you relate it?"

"Willingly," he answered: "if my lord will allow me, I will spread a mat inside the tomb, and relate the sad history of Shireen, and her ill-fated lord. See here, too, is a confirmation of the tale," and he pointed to a much effaced Persian inscription, a verse which recorded the event, and the date. It was in the year 894 of the Hejira, or A. D. 1488, during the reign of the first prince of the Imad Shahy dynasty of Berar.

"And the place where Azim was thus buried alive, does it still exist, O Sein?" I asked, when he had finished the tale.

"It does," he said; "behind the old palace in the town, there is a wall which once was part of it, there is a niche in that wall which has been once closed up, and has evidently held something; it is now partly open, and ruined; they will shew it to you Sahib, if you ask, but men like not to go there, the place is deemed accursed."

I went there, and was shown the spot by one who lived near and tended some goats, which picked up a scanty subsistence among the crumbling ruins. He conducted me to the ruined wall through a tangled brake of custard apple bushes, and some thorny creepers—a fit haunt for panthers and snakes; and he showed me the fatal niche. It had been regularly built; but the portions of a rough wall, which adhered to each side, though in the centre it was broken down, told plainly enough, the tale I had listened to.

Reader, the tale I heard was the legend thou hast read; may it dwell in thy heart, and preserve thee from Curiosity, Discontent, and Ambition.

O D E.

THE LAST SEPARATION.

BY SIR EDWARD LYTTON BULWER, BART.

WE shall not rest together, love,
 When death has wrench'd my heart from thine;
 The sun may smile thy grave above
 When clouds are dark on mine;—
 I know not why—since in the tomb
 No instinct fires the silent heart—
 And yet it seems a thought of gloom
 That we should ever part;—
 That journeying through the toilsome past,
 Thus hand in hand and side by side,
 The rest we reach should, at the last,
 The weary ones divide;
 That the same breezes should not sigh
 The self-same funeral boughs among,
 Nor o'er *one* grave at daybreak die
 The nightbird's lonely song:—
 A foolish thought—for WE are not
 The things that rest beneath the sod,
 The very shapes we wore forgot
 When near the smile of GOD.
 A foolish thought—yet human too,
 For Love is not the soul's alone,
 It winds around the *form* we woo,
 The *mortal* we have known;—

The eyes that speak such tender truth,
The lips that every care assuage,
The hand that thrills the heart in youth,
And smooths the couch in age.
With these, THE HUMAN—Human Love
Will twine its thoughts and weave its doom,
And still confound the life above
With death beneath the tomb.
And who shall tell in yonder skies
What earthlier instincts we retain,
What link to souls released, supplies
The old material chain?
The stars that pierced this darksome state
May fade in that meridian shore,
And human love, like human hate,
Be memory, and no more.
We will not think it—for in vain
Were all our dreams of Heaven could show,
Without the hope to love again
What we have loved below.
But still the heart will haunt the well
Wherein the golden bowl lies broken,
And treasure in the narrow cell
The past's most holy token.
Or wherefore grieve above the dead,
Why bid the rose-tree o'er them bloom,
Why fondly deck their dismal bed,
And sanctify the tomb?
'Tis through the form the soul we love!
And hence the thought will chill the heart,
That though our souls may meet above,
Our forms shall rest apart.

ITALY.

BY J. KENYON, ESQ.

FAIR blows the breeze—depart, depart!
And tread with me th' Italian shore,
And feed thy soul with glorious art,
And drink again of classic lore.

Nor, haply, wilt thou deem it wrong,
When not in mood too gravely wise,
At idle length to lie along
And quaff a bliss from bluest skies.

Or, pleased more pensive joy to woo
At falling eve, by ruin gray
Muse o'er the generations, who
Have passed, as we must pass away.

Or mark o'er olive-tree and vine
Steep towns uphung—to win from them
Some thought of southern Palestine,
Some dream of old Jerusalem.

THE TWO ROSES.

A SKETCH OF SOCIETY.

BY THE HONORABLE E. PHIPPS.

It is seldom that so complete and so sudden a descent in station can be made as when a country gentleman of substance and position, well known, and well esteemed in his own neighbourhood, transports himself, for the first time, to London. Though he boast every rural dignity, though he be like the illustrious Robert Shallow of Shakspeare, "justice of the peace and coram, and custorum, aye, and ratulorum too," he shall find himself a mere struggling, almost unnoticed, individual, when merged in the moving mass of London *notabilités*; and, unless he boast pre-eminent talent or political reputation, wealth will do little for him. His dinner invitations will be put aside for future consideration, and only accepted if nothing better offers; his worthy lady must court attendance at her balls as a favour; and his fair daughters, though fresh as spring, bright as their own mountain streams, and pure as the air they have breathed, may find preferred to them, by the majority of dancing dandies, some *fanée, blasée, et passé*, (to use their own jargon), but long acknowledged town beauty.

Such was the state of things about to be encountered by Sir George and Lady Montague, who had been summoned from the quiet dignity of their family seat in Lincolnshire, by the call of an enlightened constituency, and persuaded that the good of their country required him to attend in parlia-

ment as the representative of the —— division of that county. Stage by stage, on the north road, had he felt his consequence abating, as the euphonious designation of "the worthy baronet," and the emphatic "certainly, Sir George," had subsided into the average amount of inn civility bestowed on a well loaded barouche and pair.

On the particular evening to which the attention of the reader is directed, Sir George and Lady Montague were about to meet all the responsibilities of a first dinner party in London. In Lincolnshire, such a matter would have been of every day occurrence, and the baronet would have been satisfied with the ordinary staple commodity of country guests, while his lady would have committed to her cook and housekeeper (for, like other great country ladies, she had her *Mrs. Pouch*) all the anxieties of preparation; but on this particular evening Sir George reproached himself to the last moment, with the omission of some particularly important acquaintance, or the admission of some rather discreditable old friend, while Lady Montague felt conscious that her turbot was not so fine as it might have been, or that her stewed beef ought never to have found a place in her bill of fare.

Seven o'clock, the ostensible hour of meeting, had long past, and Sir George had returned from a second visit to his cellar, to find his lady still solving the knotty point of precedence between two dowager countesses; a question of all importance at Montague Park, but which would in Grosvenor Street most likely be settled by their accidental position near the door. At this moment, their only daughter, Constance, entered the room. A fairer and more peaceful vision was never displayed to troubled world. Her fair hair, dovelike eye, and glowing yet delicate complexion, her look of innocence and gaiety, were but a few of her outward charms, while her every expression told of more within. It was her

first season; and on this their earliest opportunity for seeing her set off by the charms of a simple yet elegant dress, even her parents were startled by her loveliness.

"Well, my dear," said her mother, "Madame Devy has certainly performed her promise, there never was a more becoming robe." She looked at her on every side, and then added, "But what are you going to do with that beautiful rose?"

"I meant to offer it to our neighbour, Arthur Vernon—Mr. Vernon, I suppose, I must call him, now that we are in London," said Constance, with a slight blush; "you know he had got into a way of always expecting his carnation when he was at Montague Park last autumn, and I should not like him to think that London has really power to change old friends."

"Very right, my dear—very pretty attention—very nice feelings," said Lady Montague, bearing in mind, indeed, as must be confessed, the broad acres of young Vernon's estate, and its propinquity to their own.

Here, however, a thundering knock at the door brought back all her attention to her expected guests, and to the necessity of putting on a *degagé* air at the moment of their entrance, and a proper amount of cordiality in her welcome.

Several guests had arrived before Mr. Vernon entered the room, and, when having greeted her father and mother, he approached the corner of the room in which Constance was seated, she presented him with the rose, simply adding, "You see, Mr. Vernon, I have not forgotten my dignified appellation of Flora, which I earned by our Lincolnshire carnations." His reply, as he carelessly transferred it to his button-hole, was merely, "Thank ye; very sweet, very pretty; really the first one I have seen this year," and then he passed on.

How differently may the same action be viewed and performed by different persons. To Vernon, this little offering

was merely what it professed to be, a continuance of the friendly kindness of a country house, while to her it was meant as the earnest, though silent, renewal of an intercourse which had been the happiness of her life, and of an understanding which she thought had been mutual.

In their descent to dinner, it had been intended, by Lady Montague, that Constance, who immediately succeeded Mr. Vernon, should be his neighbour at table; but an unlucky movement to the right, on the part of that young lady's cavalier, placed them on opposite sides, and in such a position that the plateau, with its artificial flowers, intercepted even their view of each other.

Vernon had for his neighbour a Mrs. Evelyn Fainwood, who, as she is likely to play a considerable part in this little tale, deserves more particular description:—

She had married, at an early age, the rich Mr. Fainwood, and his death, which occurred in the first year of their union, had left her in the dangerous position of a young, pretty, and rich widow. Nearly twenty years had since rolled over her head, and still she had not taken to herself a second husband. As no very great original attachment had been supposed to exist between her and her lord, and there had been no opportunity for long-formed habits of mutual dependence to develop themselves, the cause of her faithfulness to his memory remained a problem. Whether it was that gaieties into which she had soon plunged, and the position in society which her wealth, beauty, and talents enabled her to occupy, sufficed for her every desire; that her liberty was too much valued to be lightly risked; or that her habits and course of society had made those her most intimate friends, who were not exactly such as her better feelings would have selected as companions for life, must remain subjects for speculation.

At the period of our story, though nearly forty years had

passed over her head, no intruding grey had dimmed the blackness of her glossy hair; her brow was unwrinkled, and her eye retained all its pristine powers to subdue by softness, or awe by majesty, according to the method she chose to adopt.

She had, by the most imperceptible arrangement, procured Mr. Vernon as her neighbour, partly from curiosity to see more of one who was evidently new to London, partly from interest in the little scene between him and Miss Montague, which had not escaped her quick eye, and partly from a mere every day preference for handsome features set off by an intelligent expression of countenance.

She soon found that the charms of the most correct *ton de société* would awe rather than please his rustic ignorance, that the boldness of repartee and masculine energy of mind with which she was obliged to rouse her *blasé* associates, would shock him, and that he was capable of appreciating something more than mere pretty silliness; in short, she determined to play off upon him an exhibition of refinement of feeling, of delicacy of sentiment, which are, alas! often more elegantly displayed (because more carefully measured) by the hundred that dissemble, than the one who really feels.

Vernon drank in her words with greedy ears. He yielded himself to the spell of the Circe; and the full view that was commanded by Miss Montague of the lady, and her imperfect and occasional glimpses of Vernon through the screen of intervening flowers, presented to her a now half-timid, now impassioned, now tender speaker, in Mrs. Fainwood, and in him an eager and attentive listener.

Mrs. Fainwood had a habit of at times veiling the glances of her fine eyes by their silken lashes, as she cast them down on some object near her, continuing the while her conversation, and only, from time to time, allowing them to rest on

those of him she addressed. On one of these occasions she caught sight of the budding moss-rose in the button-hole of Mr. Vernon's coat. Keeping most dexterously to the subject they were then discussing, namely, the charm that exists in the trusting confidence of early youth, she added, "It always reminds me of the first buds of spring, in which we poor Londoners are permitted to view nature in all its freshness before it is contaminated by the glare, and dust, and dirt of a busy town: I own that there is nothing so charming, whether to the eye or to the fancy, as the first bud of the first rose of summer, like that beautiful one in your coat, Mr. Vernon,—it is my favorite flower at my favourite season." Her eye, which had been fastened on his rose, was now raised till its glance met his.

"How can it live for a minute," said he, in answer, "but in the keeping of one who knows so well how to appreciate it?" He withdrew it from its place, and presented it to her.

Miss Montague saw not him, but she was witness to the transfer of her little offering, and to the expression of triumph and gratified vanity with which Mrs. Fainwood quietly deposited it in her bosom.

After the ladies went up stairs, Mrs. Fainwood took an early opportunity of seating herself by Miss Montague, having, as she assured her, taken a great fancy to her from the first, which she accounted for by the fact, that Sir George had been not only related to, but an old friend of the late Mr. Fainwood. The liking did not, however, appear to be mutual; and after she had shocked the good taste of her young hearer by some gross flattery on her beauty, and annoyed her feelings by a casual allusion to the *gaucherie* and awkward gallantry of "that poor young man from the country, who had sat next to her at dinner," she took her departure without awaiting the arrival of the gentlemen, which, she well

knew, Sir George's old-fashioned hospitality would postpone to a late hour. Before she went, however, she volunteered a promise to Miss Montague, of coming to sit with her for a *nice long chat*, the very first morning she could spare from her numerous engagements.

When Mr. Vernon arrived with the first detachment from below, the only change in Miss Montague's manner or appearance, produced by the events of the evening, was a slight accession of coldness in her address to him, and the fact that a rose like his that she had herself worn, (the twin production of the same tree), had been deposed from its throne. Such trifles as these were, however, disregarded by Vernon, as his eye glanced round the room, in vain search for Mrs. Fainwood. Not being able to see her, he bethought himself of one whom he had not been so much in the habit of overlooking—the playmate of his infancy, the companion of his riper years, the pure and gentle Constance Montague. He approached her with inquiries as to how she liked her first sight of London.

"I fear I shall never feel so happy here as in Montague Park," she answered, in a tone of coldness, by no means in accordance with the inward feelings that dictated her reply. She turned from him, and did not continue the conversation; he followed her, and tried some other subject, with no better success. Miss Montague was not one of the ladies sometimes to be met with, who will submit to be treated like playthings—eagerly greeted when they have the charm of novelty, or the advantage of absence of other attraction, and then laid on the shelf, to make way for some newer object, and again resumed as fancy or idleness may dictate. Piqued into an assumption of carelessness, rather than moved, as he ought to have been, to that repentant gentleness which goes to the very heart of woman, Vernon retreated to a ball where he fancied he should meet Mrs. Fainwood.

That the events that had occurred on the night of her father's dinner party should continue an air of constraint and coldness in Constance's reception of Vernon next time they met in society, will not astonish any one who has attended to the detail of his *enormous* and *unpardonable* offences. It is well known—

“How slight a cause may move
Dissension between those that love,”

but if not, to “receive my foolish flower,” was sufficient to make the poet's child “indeed unblest;” still more heinous a crime must it have been in Cupid's calendar, to give away that flower when received.

Such considerations, indeed, entered not into the mind of the unfortunate Vernon, who, too much occupied with Mrs. Fainwood on this particular occasion to think of aught else, found a ready reason for Miss Montague's coldness in the intoxicating success of a first appearance to one, young, pretty, and an heiress. With a feeling then on both sides of unexplained and unacknowledged ill-usage, it naturally happened that Vernon's rising partiality for the society of Miss Montague, which had almost insensibly to himself reached a high point, under the roof of her father in Lincolnshire, should have given way to the indignant feeling that is caused by the idea of having thrown away a preference.

Not so disinclined for further acquaintanceship was Vernon when his thoughts turned to Mrs. Fainwood, with her interesting mixture of power and weakness, of simplicity and enthusiasm, as unfolded to him in his first meeting with her. In his efforts to improve his intimacy with her he was not, however, at first very successful.

He happened to be at the Opera about a week after Sir George Montague's dinner, when he saw Mrs. Fainwood in her box, and, as it appeared, quite alone, though as she was

on the same side of the house, he could not be quite sure of that fact. He, however, boldly entered, and found that the place by her side was occupied by young Lord Charles Sydenham, with whom he was in that most disagreeable state of non-acquaintanceship, viz., the having seen him very often without having been introduced to him. Lord Charles was a good-looking young man, with a very fine pair of eyes, dark curling *mustaches*, and a most plentiful lack of wit. Indeed, as far as conversation went, so often did he run aground, that he was obliged to fill up the pauses which his companion's discourse might leave unoccupied, by either fixing his fine eyes on her face, or twirling his mustachios, neither of them very agreeable or interesting performances, it is to be feared; but still as he continued to find ladies who were satisfied with his society on these terms, there was no reason for greater exertion.

The entrance of Vernon seemed not very welcome to either party. Mrs. Fainwood, like all slaves of fashion, was very jealous as to the appearance and character of the visitors to her opera-box, and there was something in young Vernon, on this evening, too smart or too plain a waistcoat, too easy or too diffident an approach, that made her doubt his passing current; there flitted, therefore, across her features just that amount of vexation at his entrance that was sufficient to encourage Lord Charles in his measures of passive annoyance. After the first greetings, a sudden silence pervaded the box; Lord Charles had fixed his eyes on the new comer for a minute or two, looked at him from head to foot, then directed a glance to Mrs. Fainwood, with a look that seemed to inquire what could have brought the intruder there. He now twirled his mustachios, hummed the finale of Rubini's last aria, looked at Vernon again, and then turning to Mrs. Fainwood said, as if continuing a conversation that had only for a moment

been interrupted—"You don't know her then? well, I could give you a capital story about her, but I can't tell it you *just now*."

"Oh, pray do! why not?" said the lady.

"*I can't just now!* I'll tell you in a minute;" then another interval of silence—another look through his opera-glass—another glance at the intruder—another twirl of his mustachios—another morceau of Rubini's.

Vernon in vain "cudgelled his brains" for an observation worthy of filling up the pause; he at length stammered out a general observation as to the opera, which at first neither party noticed, and which at length drew from Mrs. Fainwood—"Yes; oh, yes!"—he felt his cheeks grow crimson, wished with all his heart he could with any appearance of justice kick Lord Charles out of the box, and ended by seizing the opportunity of the curtain falling to retire.

This rebuff from Mrs. Fainwood, and the constant coldness of manner in the only other person in whom he was interested, took away from Vernon any great inducement to visit evening parties. The consequences were advantageous to him in the House of Commons, in which house he more frequently found himself, in company with Sir George Montague, than in the worthy Baronet's town mansion. Side by side did they fight the battles of which their constituents had sent them as the champions; but while Sir George's eloquence was confined to a very hearty "aye" or "no," which was always to be depended upon by his party, an emphatic "hear, hear," and the occasional presentation of a petition, young Vernon had begun to distinguish himself by speeches, which were principally marked by research and information, together with pertinency to the matter in hand. The reputation which he had thus acquired, procured him fresh invitations to evening parties, and gladly would Mrs. Fainwood have again sum-

moned to her side the admirer whose attentions she had before both courted and slighted. But no! he remembered the uncomfortable feelings with which he had last parted from her, and could not make up his mind again to endure the quietly insulting manner of Lord Charles, whom he generally saw in attendance on her. It may seem weak to fear the encounter with one whom he might easily have discomfited, not by an effort, but by even the natural exertion of his powers of conversation; but every one has his weak point, and this was his.

With this uncertain state of things closed at the same time the parliamentary session and the fashionable season. Vernon had passed a few months in a continental tour, and had again returned to London, summoned there by the unexpected calling together of parliament, in the middle of November.

He was coming in from a cheerless ride in the Park, when he met the carriage of Mrs. Fainwood, who was also going home. To pull the string, to express her delight at his appearance in town, and to beg him to come and see her at her house in Berkeley Square, was the first impulse of Mrs. Fainwood, on which she immediately acted.

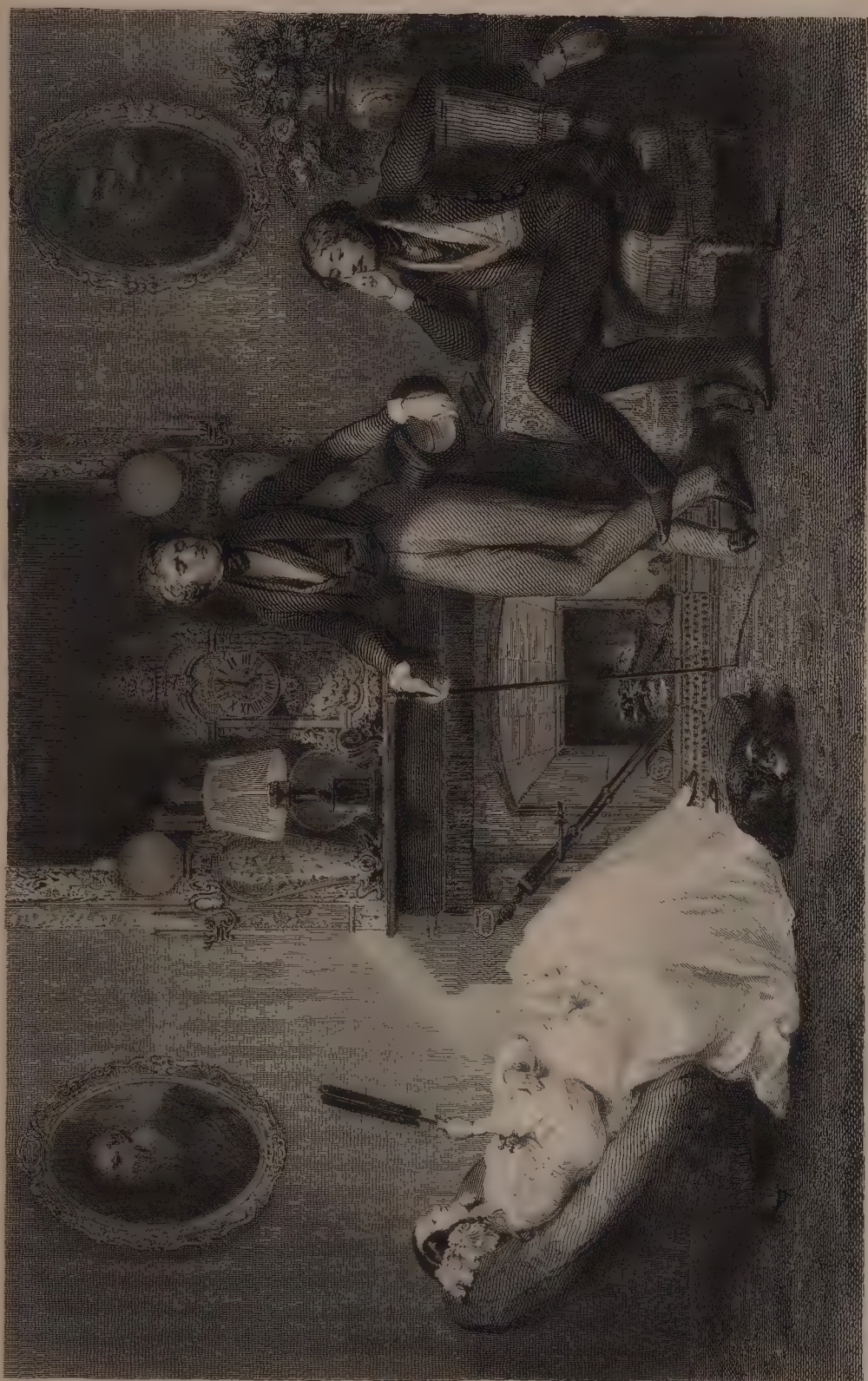
At this time of the year, acquaintance—nay, intimacy, is soon matured, and the afternoon visit which her express invitation had produced, soon became a daily one. A flood tide of gaieties no longer pressed upon and drowned the better feelings of her heart, and the finer qualities of her mind. She now felt that she required in conversation something more sterling, matter more interesting than the fashionable tittle-tattle, the mere gossip of the day, and such food for a now more invigorated mind Vernon was able to supply. Mrs. Fainwood (in the absence of what were formerly her highest pleasures and most coveted honours) seemed to feel, like Cardinal Wolsey (and perhaps from the same reason) her

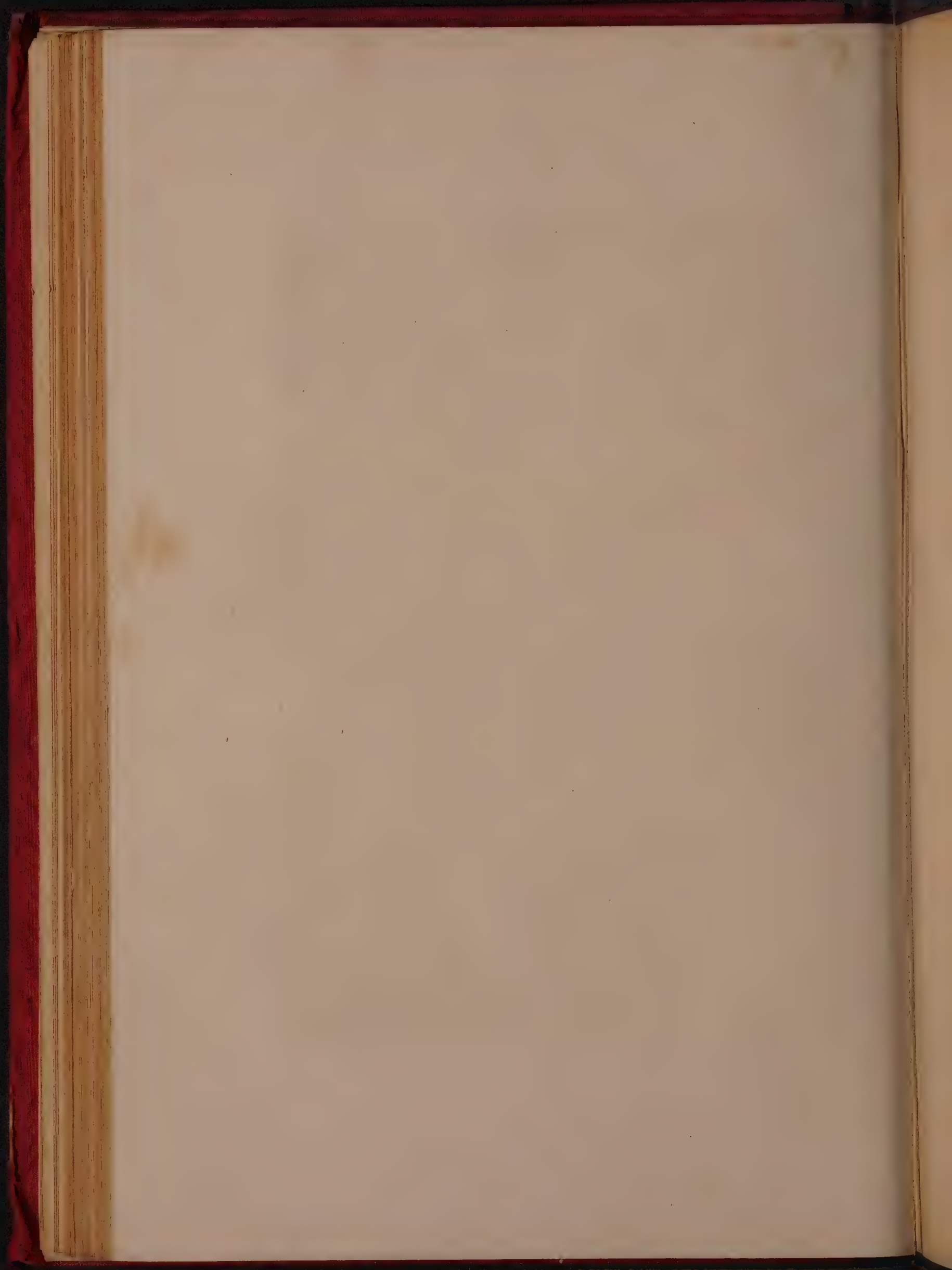
"heart new opened—never so truly blest;" but whether the change was final and positive, remains to be seen.

It was about this time that Vernon received a note from her, to say that she had arranged a long intended party to the play, to which he was to accompany her, that she would be happy to see him at dinner at five o'clock, and that they could go together, as old Lady Doldrum had, at her particular request, agreed to save him from a *tête-à-tête*.

"Was there ever any thing so provoking?" said Vernon, as he finished the note, the first he had ever received from her; "and I have promised to dine with the Montagues." He dismissed from his mind the possibility of breaking through that engagement, and forwarded to Mrs. Fainwood his despair in the prettiest terms in which he could couch it, concluding, that as he could not flatter himself (however much he might wish it) that she would arrange her play party for another day, he took the liberty of sending with his note a bouquet, whose only merit was that it contained a Pæstum rose, which he well remembered was her favorite flower, while to a mind like hers, he was sure that the last rose of the year would be as full of poetry as the first, which he had had the pleasure of offering her on the happy evening of their acquaintance. His note and his compliments were, perhaps, a little too elaborate and high-flown, but they were the production of *une tête exaltée*.

His answer had been long despatched, when in his afternoon's walk he met Sir George Montague, who, alluding to his dinner engagement, begged that his young friend would come punctually, as Lady Montague had arranged a little party afterwards. The barbarity of being required to give up all his promised happiness for the sake of a dinner and early evening party, struck him as so monstrous, that summoning up resolution, which he would not have had if a note had been





necessary, he announced to the astonished Sir George, that unforeseen circumstances must oblige him to give up the pleasure he had promised himself, and that he must trust to the kindness of his old friend to make good his excuses to Lady Montague. So saying, he hurried off to make the most of his newly acquired liberty, and found he had only just time to go home and dress before the hour of Mrs. Fainwood's play dinner. It might be put off altogether, but if not, he determined to go there ready prepared.

On his arrival at Mrs. Fainwood's, Vernon was much annoyed at finding she was not alone; but, seated opposite to her, and in a comfortable arm-chair, as if settled for a good long visit, the object of his horror during the last season, the good-natured but not very wise Lord Charles.

He was anxious to announce at once the change in his engagements, but feared, if he said a word about the play while her other visitor was there, that Mrs. Fainwood would be obliged to ask him to join their party, and this would, he felt, spoil the whole pleasure of the evening. Lord Charles acknowledged his presence with that sort of greeting which the man of the world knows how to bestow, as if out of compliment to the hostess in whose house they thus mutually met, and to avoid the awkwardness of an alternate duo, rather than from any great delight at his entrance. In fact, Lord Charles showed neither pleasure nor the contrary feeling, but after such a greeting as I have described, remained silent, except to throw in now and then an observation, in which the "my dear fellow," with which he addressed Vernon, had nothing in it of that friendly and flattering intimacy which the words seemed to imply.

Mrs. Fainwood very soon appeared weary of the restraint attending a conversation carried on under such circumstances, and leaned back in her chair, looking now overcome by *ennui*,

and now touched for a moment by a little malicious amusement at the position of her two visitors.

Vernon turned a glance on the clock, the ticking of which was painfully audible during the silence of a minute that succeeded. It was already past five, and therefore close upon the hour of their intended play dinner; the lamp was lighted, so *that* hint to a somewhat tardy visitor remained not to be given, and yet there sat Lord Charles, as quietly as if he had no thoughts of stirring, and looking complacently at his feet, as if perfectly unconscious of the indignant glances with which his rival regarded him. It was at this moment that Vernon, for the first time, remarked that Lord Charles was, like himself, in an evening dress; and then a thought, full of horror, succeeded, namely, that Mrs. Fainwood had invited him to supply the place of his unfortunate self. He looked again; could he believe his eyes? was that indeed his own rose, the one he had sent, with so prettily a turned sentence, to Mrs. Fainwood that very morning?—he could have sworn to it among a thousand, even if they had not been so rare at this time of the year! And there it reposed in the button-hole of that most conceited young man, instead of (as he had hoped) gracing the table of her to whom it had been sent.

At the moment of this mortifying discovery, dinner and Lady Doldrum were announced at the same moment; and as Lord Charles appropriated to himself the arm of his hostess, Vernon had only time to make the long delayed announcement, that he had just got rid of his former engagement, and was at Mrs. Fainwood's service for the evening, when he found himself on his way to the dining-room with the deaf Lady Doldrum hanging on his arm, and the merry laugh of Mrs. Fainwood ringing in his ears, as she followed with Lord Charles. Arrived down stairs, he did not find his mortifications ended, as he had to wait while a chair and a cover were

set for him, and thus acted the part he had mentally assigned to Lord Charles, of a supplementary and unexpected addition to the party. Similar annoyances followed him throughout the evening. Lady Doldrum, whose deafness made her invaluable for the purpose of adding propriety to a duo, was utterly disqualified for the principal part, which she had thus kindly undertaken at the shortest notice (as they say at the theatres), in a *partie quarrée*. The consequence was, that, while Mrs. Fainwood and her companion, whether at the dinner or during the play, were occupying each other's attention, poor Vernon had enough to do in listening to and bawling to this chatty old lady.

During an interval in which the interesting situations in the play enforced silence, Vernon, his heart swelling with mortification and anger, ran over the events of the evening, and as his eye naturally rested the while on the rose in Lord Charles' coat, his second offering to Mrs. Fainwood recalled to his mind the first, and with it a fancied parallel between the two flowers and the ladies with whose memory they were connected. As he thought of the budding moss-rose, the firstling of its year, blushing, and hardly daring to show its face from out the soft-spreading green that veiled it, he remembered *her* who, with mingled frankness and modesty, had presented it to him—a fitting emblem of herself. As he then again glanced at the flaunting, and now full-blown Pæstum, displaying its beauties, and shedding its perfume in every direction, (preserving, however, its charms beyond its natural season, by the efforts of art), he acknowledged a similitude, which, if Mrs. Fainwood had not so grievously offended him, might never have crossed his mind.

But the interest on the stage was increasing; the critical point in the drama had arrived; the heads of his companions were bent forward to see the fate of the hero who had enlisted

their sympathy. Vernon followed their example, and in doing so caught sight of a sort of Indian head-dress of gold and scarlet, two boxes nearer the stage, which, while he well knew it, as having created a sensation in Lincolnshire, could not, indeed, fail of being noticed in London; it was, in short, a very remarkable *tocque* of Lady Montague's, that she was in the habit of reserving for grand occasions.

Vernon knew full well, that where a ridiculous mother is, there is also often to be met with a pretty and agreeable daughter; that, moreover, this was most certainly the case in the present instance. Muttering, therefore, excuses to his party, which he knew would not be very nicely scanned, he left them, and sought Lady Montague's box; in order to reach which, although it was only two off, he had (by the ingenious construction of the passages) to descend almost a hundred stairs, and again ascend an equal number. What excuses he made for his original defection from Lady Montague's party, how he accounted for his thus unexpectedly joining it, or whether he wisely made none, and how agreeable a contrast his reception afforded to his position a few minutes before, must be left to the imagination of the reader.

For several days after her play party, did Mrs. Fainwood in vain expect a visit from Vernon. The first day that passed without his calling, she laughed at what she considered his *pique*; on the second she grew uneasy; and the third made her first sensible of the value she set upon his society. Lord Charles had left town the next day for Paris: but even if she had been obliged to choose between the two, she felt that the void caused by the loss of the more sterling conversation of Vernon was greater than any "heavy miss" which Lord Charles' absence could occasion. Vernon had called forth powers which had been before even to herself all unknown, and had made her feel, as she hoped, ere too late, that life

had attractions of which the column devoted to fashionable arrangements, furnished no details; and that the "good word" of other and more difficult critics than even the most irreproachable exclusives, was worth earning by new and more meritorious achievements than any she had mastered.

In vain, however, she regretted his absence; he came not. At length, about a fortnight afterwards, there was put into her hand an invitation from Sir George and Lady Montague to dine with them on the following Monday. With but one purpose in view, with one single hope, she accepted it. It was there that her first triumph had been achieved, and it was there that she would again regain her captive. She entered the room decked for conquest; a combination of simplicity and refinement had been bestowed on her toilette: her first glance at the mirror, as she entered, suggested the best hopes; and a second at the company confirmed them, as she caught sight of the well-known figure of Arthur Vernon seated by Miss Montague. He greeted her in the most friendly manner, but notwithstanding all her manœuvring, she had the mortification of seeing him hand Miss Montague to dinner. Though Mrs. Fainwood was seated on his other side, he hardly addressed her; and Miss Montague seemed to be listening to his earnest conversation with an eagerness and *abandon* which she thought perfectly unfeminine. All her indignation, all her hopes, and all her doubts, were, however, concluded by Lady Montague's first address to her, when the ladies went up stairs.

"I am sure, my dear Mrs. Fainwood," began that lady, "you will excuse my having asked you to such a mere family party; but the fact is, I wished to make you better acquainted with Mr. Vernon, whose marriage with my daughter is, I am delighted to say, arranged, and to take place shortly. They have known each other from children, being such near neigh-

bours. I think you met him here once, and my daughter told me that you had on that evening expressed so much interest in her, that I could not resist asking you to-day. I put you next to him that you might see a little of him, as he is really a very fine young man. I remarked, however, that he hardly spoke to you; but then, you know, what could one expect with my daughter there, his lady-love, at his side?"—The entrance of the "fine young man," and his passing remark of little moment, saved Mrs. Fainwood from listening any longer to the most unwelcome words that ever rung in the ears of baffled coquette.

It is unnecessary to add more, than that the flower which seemed to have so much connexion with, and influence over, the fortunes and prospects of Vernon and his bride, did not desert them in after life. Their path was, indeed, in the poet's language, strewn with roses, while a *young rosebud* furnished the only addition to their happiness of which it was susceptible. As for Mrs. Fainwood, her roses are long since fled, "their perfume dead," and all the traces they have left are

" The thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her,"

in the thought that she was unable, with all her fashion, all her wealth, and all her talent, to attach the only being whom her *heart* had really chosen.

A V I S I O N.

(ALLEGORICAL.)

BY LORD LEIGH.

LEGIONS of splendours there I saw, as stars
 Numberless, bright'ning o'er a river clear,
 Winnowing the air unruffled; din of wars
 They know not, nor approaching tempests fear;
 But endless songs of joy and triumph hear.
 And each, distinctly beautiful, at will
 In various hues as fancy prompts appear;
 Gay as the flowers that with their fragrance fill,
 Above the sunbright stream, the air so mild, so still.

Action, with them swift follows thought, and thought
 Is almost intuition; and awake
 Their senses are, with strength coequal fraught,
 All in one instant; thus the orb'd lake
 Reflects gilt clouds, green mountains, bush and brake:
 And, as phenomena magnetic change
 Their forms, still varying with the hues they take,
 They through the light-impurpled ether range,
 Glittering like blazonry of arms rich in devices strange.

The river windeth on through vales immense,
Where "myriad-minded" beings ever reap
Harvests of knowledge, with delight intense;
These in their memories they treasured keep:
(Not, such as ours is, an ill-sorted heap),
And love in them, entire affection, dwells;
While zeal benevolent, that ne'er will sleep,
Their energy of intercourse impels:
Though vast their wisdom is, their virtue *that* excels.

Fast interchange of virtues, knowledge, powers,
(For by communion only joys increase)
Is theirs; idlesse *our* energies devours,
Their rapid interactions never cease;
That, which we toil to grasp, they win with ease.
And, as at rest a quick-revolving wheel
Appears when lit by flash of lightning, these
Bright beings of repose the strength reveal,
As with excess of ardour burns their vivid zeal.

The stream rolls on o'er rubies, sapphires, stones
Of wond'rous virtue, of which e'en the least
Had been the richest gems of orient thrones,
Or goblets at the proud Belshazzar's feast,
Collective wealth of the exhaustless east:
Then darkling, on it flows, through forest-shades
That harbour the plumed gryphon, mystic beast;
That world of verdure no rude thing invades,
But nature's loveliest works are seen in all their grades.

A thousand thousand milk-white unicorns
There rove, fair types of virtue joined to grace
And independent strength; of gold their horns
Shine thro' the glades, as comets flame thro' space,
And golden-hoof'd they are, this glorious race.
Through forest-depths, sportive as virgins full
Of life and joy, gazelles each other chase:
Their beautiful movements to behold, e'en dull
Spirits would happy be, and garlands for them cull;

These emblem innocence that fears not ill,
And gaiety, from trust in heaven that springs:
But there are other creatures fairer still,
Now here, now there, careering; beauteous things,
With eyes like living sapphires in their wings;
Such to the Sage of Patmos in his dream
Sublime appear'd before the "King of Kings;"
Types of angelic natures that supreme
Are, for the sun of suns on them pours forth his beam.

Ever-green trees I saw with fruit of gold,
For ages have they lived, yet undecay'd
And undecaying, ever young though old:
Unlike the Upas-tree, beneath whose shade
Pernicious all that blooms must quickly fade,
And sicken living things, they vigour give
Unwonted to the wights that seek the aid
Of their life-giving branches, all to *live*,
Not as here *dreamy* man to vegetate, revive.

These signify the mighty power of faith
That renovates the mind by sin unstrung :
Omnipotent to save, the Gospel saith,
Is faith ; the golden fruit, on branches hung,
Typify virtues that from faith have sprung.
Far far above the forest's verdurous mass,
Resembling that of which great Dante sung,
Eagles, as many-color'd globes of glass
Glitter in sunlight, brighten, stellar lights surpass.

Emblems of highest wisdom, that perceives
All the relations of all worlds, the chain
Of causes and effects that nature weaves,
All truths that unevolved in one remain,
Like future harvests in a single grain,
These eagles are :—in depths yet deep'ning lies,
More wonderful than ought Romance can feign,
A vast succession of realities :
A miracle is earth—with wonders teem the skies !

THE MONOMANIAC:

A TALE.

BY THE HON. MRS. ERSKINE NORTON.

"Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord;
 "I will repay." ST. PAUL.

EARLY in the sixteenth century, on the shores of the Baltic, eastward of the river on which Rostock is situated, was to be seen the ancient convent of St. Hilda, long venerated for the superior sanctity of its sisterhood, respected for its wealth and power, and loved for its charity and usefulness. Many of the noblest families of Mecklenburgh sent thither their daughters for education; the peasants of the surrounding country looked up to it for instruction, advice, and assistance, and often for its intercession between them and their feudal lords. Adjoining its territories, at the distance of four or five miles, stood the castle of Rosenberg, which, with its rich and extensive domain, and numerous retainers and serfs, had been in possession of the Counts of that name for many generations, governing with regal power, and in almost regal splendor.

But a change had passed over the land: the star of Luther had risen. Ten years had elapsed since the family of Rosenberg had disappeared from the castle, and strangers now reigned in their stead. The convent bore the appearance of a fortress; the peasantry were no longer serfs. Two years

after the revolutionary hurricane was over, a lady was received, with much secrecy and mystery, as a resident in the convent, accompanied by her little daughter. It was understood that none but the abbess knew who she really was; the novices and scholars could not even guess; and if memory and conjecture served the nuns better, their lips were religiously sealed upon the subject, even to each other. She was treated with the highest respect by the Abbess and the ecclesiastics of rank, who occasionally visited the convent.

Leonora, her daughter, was, at the time our story opens, approaching the age at which the happy blindness of childhood wears off, and opening youth begins to think, and wonder, and look about it. The change, however, was not striking in Leonora; she had always been a contemplative and pensive, although not a melancholy child; the character of her mother, and their peculiar situation, probably produced the former effects, but the care and affection that surrounded her childhood prevented the latter.

But the more Leonora thought on their situation, the more she was puzzled. While seated on the cushion at her mother's feet, she would often drop her work, or her book, and raise her eyes with an expression of absorbing interest and curiosity to her mother's face, as memory touched some latent chord, bringing the confused recollection of a time when they were *not* inhabitants of the convent. In her mother, (the Lady Agatha she was called), Leonora beheld the mildest, the meekest, and the most suffering of all the beings she had yet met with. Her filial affection became the closer and stronger from the difference that existed in the qualities of their minds: that of Leonora was now rapidly unfolding, and presented an object of the highest interest, mingled with somewhat of wonder and apprehension, to those who watched over her. It appeared to possess a force and concentration that would

render her capable of great actions, either good or evil; few slight and undefined feelings floated on its surface; all had, or were attaining, depth and strength; she loved or hated with equal warmth and constancy. In her manners she was remarkably quiet and refined; her smile was fascinating, but the expression of her large, deeply-fringed, and azure eyes varied extraordinarily. In religion she was an enthusiast;—the danger in which her Church was placed rendered it to her doubly an object of veneration and love. But her religious veneration, however carefully cherished and deeply rooted, was not the leading impression of her mind; superior even to it was the love she bore her mother, who was yet young, and, though in rapidly declining health, exceedingly lovely. Leonora never recollected a harsh word from her lips, it seemed impossible they could pronounce one. She was so calm, so pure, so holy, that she scarcely seemed an inhabitant of this earth, and certainly but one tie appeared to bind her to it—the tie of her young, enthusiastic, and devoted child.

It was a beautiful summer evening, and Leonora was busily assisting to spread cloaks and carpets on the turf seat her mother loved to repose on, when able to take air and exercise on the terrace. She flew to meet her, and displacing her attendant, conducted her to her seat. They remained alone; the declining sun gilded the distant towers of Rosenberg Castle, rising from its embowering woods, and looking down on the rich and cultivated vale that divided it from the eminence on which the convent reposed. The Baltic stretched out before them; its usually turbulent waves rolling with a soft and sleepy murmur to the shore, while the horizon was here and there darkened by a passing sail; and, nearer to land, the fishermen, tempted by the calmness of the weather, were busily plying their precarious trade. But it was on the towers of Rosenberg that the Lady Agatha fixed her mournful eyes, and as she gazed they filled with tears.

"My mother," said the watchful Leonora, "look away from those hateful towers; the sight of them always makes you more melancholy: to-morrow, I will remove your seat to the other side."

"No, my love," replied the gentle mother, "I would still continue, for the few returning evenings I may yet have in store, to look upon those towers!"

"Are they, then, of such deep interest to you?—how?—for what?—why? Ah, dearest mother! do you not think I am yet old enough, or discreet enough, to be intrusted with the secret of your destiny? Why should there be a secret between us?"

"My dear child!" replied the Lady Agatha, "think not that I condemn the desire which you now, for the first time, express: I would long since have told you all, but I dread the impression it will make on you. Listen to me."

Leonora seated herself on the ground, with her head still resting on her mother's knee, but turned from her; her luxuriant hair assisting to conceal the brow and cheek that alternately glowed and chilled beneath it, and the singularly expressive eyes, that were never raised from the ground, except to fix, with painful intensity, on the distant, but perfectly distinct towers of Rosenberg.

"I was the only child of the last Count de Rosenberg;" began the lady; "my mother died during my infancy. I leave you to imagine the affection, the respect, the splendour, that surrounded the early years of the heiress of Rosenberg. My father, though high-minded and generous, was of a rough and haughty temper, and was more feared than loved by his vassals. The new system of religion, accompanied by certain notions of freedom and equality, began to spread through Germany; the infection reached the peasantry of Rosenberg, greatly increasing the sternness of my father's rule, and producing an unfavorable change in his character.

“The territories of the Baron de Ravenstein adjoined ours. This family was neither anciently descended nor wealthy; its members had, however, since their settlement so near to us, carefully cultivated the friendship of the Counts de Rosenberg, and had, on many occasions, been greatly indebted to their superior power and influence. The present Baron was extremely desirous that a marriage should take place between his only son and heir and myself. We had been playmates in childhood, and we met again in youth, predisposed to approve of each other. Rudolf de Ravenstein was allowed to be the most handsome, the most accomplished, and the most fascinating cavalier of his day. He spared no pains to please me, and he succeeded. I thought his love as ardent, as sincere, and as disinterested as my own. With some misgivings, I knelt with him at the feet of my father, and implored his consent to a blessing on our union—we knelt in vain. The Count de Rosenberg received, with astonishment and contempt, the proposal of the upstart Ravenssteins, and dismissed it in a manner they never forgot or forgave. Immediately after his rejection, Rudolf set out for Vienna.

“For some time I suffered severely from my disappointment, but as I feared and loved my father, I submitted with as much resignation and strength of mind as I could. ‘I am not ambitious,’ would my father say; ‘but the qualities I insist upon in the husband of the Countess de Rosenberg, are those of unblemished descent and stainless honor.’

“Such a proposal was made, about a twelvemonth after, by the Chevalier de Regenwalde, a younger brother of a family as illustrious as our own. He was commander-in-chief of the military forces in our district, and was deservedly high in favor as well at the imperial court as with the reigning family of Mecklenburgh; but he was forty, and I was sixteen. I hesitated, however, no longer, when I was informed that Rudolf

de Ravenstein had married two months after his arrival at Vienna; and, more fortunate in his second than in his first attempt, had succeeded in becoming a member of one of the noblest and wealthiest families in Austria.

"I gave my hand to the Chevalier de Regenwalde, and in so doing made my father happy. My husband was all we believed him to be—brave, wise, and of uncompromising honor and integrity: most affectionate and respectful to me, yet mingling somewhat of paternal care with a husband's love; but though I revered and esteemed, I dare not say loved him. I never forgot Rudolph; a shade of melancholy would, in spite of me, at times, pass over both mind and brow, when I thought of his cold-hearted inconstancy.

"Two happy years passed away. I was about to realize the fondest hopes of my husband and father, in giving an heir to Rosenberg, when De Regenwalde received a hasty command to head a body of troops appointed to suppress an insurrection occasioned by the Lutheran heretics in the heart of Germany. We parted; and the gallant De Regenwalde died on the field of battle, encouraging his troops, and breathing a prayer for his country and religion, in the agonies of death;—of me was his last thought! A widowed mother, I gave birth to my first—my sole—my orphaned child! You were welcomed, my Leonora, only by tears.

"Soon after your birth, Rudolf de Ravenstein, accompanied by his wife and children, arrived at his father's castle from Vienna, but no communication took place between our families.

"Heresy and revolution continued to advance with fearful and rapid strides. Symptoms of disaffection openly manifested themselves among our peasantry; and we learned, with indignation, that the Ravenssteins had done, and were doing, all they could to foment the growing discord. They them-

selves had publicly adopted what they were pleased to call the reformed faith. This produced an open rupture between us, followed by a declaration of hostilities. The schemes of the Baron de Ravenstein had been laid too well for us to escape from his snare. Our tenantry failed us. A night attack was made upon the castle during the celebration of your second birth-day. My parent perished, they say, by the hands of Rudolf and his father; and my infant and myself would probably have shared the same fate, had not a faithful servant conveyed us, wrapped in his cloak, through a subterranean passage known but to few. Rudolf was foremost in the scene of slaughter; and all those (and they were yet many) who clung to our fallen fortunes, together with our squires, pages, and many a belted knight, fell, overpowered by numbers. Not a few were cruelly massacred in cold blood.

“For two years we remained under the distant and secure, but humble roof of our generous preserver. During this time, my cousin, the Cardinal Albertini, and many other persons of rank and influence, had searched for us in vain; I had no wish to be discovered, and but for you, my child, beneath the fresh green sod that surrounded our little dwelling, my faithful vassal would have dug my last and nameless resting-place. At length we were traced: the Cardinal offered me a residence with him, at Rome; and, at the same time, the Abbess of St. Hilda prayed me to become her inmate here. I yielded to the wish of the Abbess; our preserver was honorably provided for in the household of the Cardinal: as regards ourselves, you know the rest. The De Ravenssteins succeeded in establishing themselves in our territories, uniting them with their own, and their right of possession confirmed by the government of Mecklenburgh. The old Baron is dead, and his son, the rejected Rudolf, is, at this moment, lord of Rosenberg.”

The Countess ceased: Leonora rose slowly, and crossing her clenched hands over her bosom, looked towards Rosenberg; she sighed heavily, and without turning to her mother, said—"Is he happy?"

"As far as worldly blessings go, I believe him to be happy. He is rich; he is popular among his tenantry, and among the heretic nobility. He has two children, and in these his heart is garnered up. The son, Oscar de Ravenstein, between three and four years older than yourself, is described as high spirited, amiable, and talented. His daughter Eugenia, about your own age, is beautiful, and much beloved."

"Is there no hope left of your possessions being finally restored to you?"

"None whatever. The Cardinal's last letter declares our restoration to have become utterly hopeless. He makes to you the same offer he formerly made to me; and I shall die contented when I feel assured that you will be placed, without delay, under his powerful protection, and be surrounded by all that rank, wealth, and society can bestow. You see, my Leonora, that I have not lost all ambition *for you*."

"Yet another question, dear mother,—does the Baron de Ravenstein know of your residence here?"

"No, he does not; he is perfectly in the dark concerning our fate, and probably nourishes the belief that we have both perished."

There was a pause. The Countess was amazed at the calmness which Leonora displayed. Though she repeated to herself that it was just what she most desired, it inspired her with a secret dread as unnatural. She glanced at her daughter, but, save that her cheek was paler than usual, no alteration of countenance was visible.

It was long after reported by the lay-sister, whose duty it was to arrange the chapel after evening prayers, that when

about to retire on that night, she was startled by observing the white-robed figure of Leonora enter by the vestry-door, and slowly advance with downcast eyes and folded hands. By the single and glimmering light left on the altar, she was seen to kneel in fervent prayer. Then she rose, and placing one hand on the altar, raised high the other, and, with upturned eyes, spoke the single word—"Vengeance!" in a tone so deep, so clear, so fearfully solemn, that it thrilled the listener with astonishment and awe.

From that time she devoted herself with more care and tenderness than ever to her mother, whose health at the approach of autumn declined daily; it was not thought probable that she would survive the following winter. One afternoon towards the close of autumn, the unusual mildness of the atmosphere tempted her to wish being taken once more to the terrace, where she had not been for two or three weeks. The air seemed to sooth and revive her, and with a placid smile she laid her emaciated cheek on the bosom of her daughter. A hunting horn was suddenly wound close to the convent, and from the nearest wood darted forth a party of gallant horsemen in pursuit of their game: their path lay close under the walls of the convent. The Countess caught a glimpse of the foremost of the party; she started up, and, endued for the moment with unnatural strength, stood supported by Leonora; her eager gaze bent upon the advancing horseman, and her heart beat almost audibly. It was the Baron de Ravenstein! and this was the first time her eyes had dwelt on him since the fatal interview, when he was rejected by her father. His handsome features and commanding figure had been but little injured by time. He reined in his steed as he approached, permitting his companions to pass him, while he eyed gloomily and contemptuously the peaceful retreat before him, as though he were inwardly marking it for destruction: his glance rested

for a moment on the two female figures, which appeared to be so intently viewing him; but it was only for a moment, and evidently with no symptom of recognition. He turned, and putting spurs to his horse, was almost immediately lost to their sight in the intricacies of wood and hill. Leonora perceived that the slight form she was supporting became heavier, and looking on her mother, found that she had fainted.

The Countess was conveyed to her bed, from whence she never again rose. Carefully concealing all that might be secretly passing in her mind, Leonora listened to her admonitions with the most dutiful submission, and received with seeming gratitude the Countess's last letter to the Cardinal Albertini, bequeathing her orphan daughter to his care, in terms the most solemn and pathetic. Thankfully, therefore, and in peace, on the bosom of her child, the Countess de Rosenberg breathed her last.

And all around wept, and mourned, and prayed: there was but one tearless eye, and that was Leonora's. The Abbess viewed her with consternation, as she sat motionless, with dilated eyes fixed on the dead,—on the Dead, which lay in its chill and shrouded loveliness, gently-closed eye, placid smile, almost transparent hands, joined as though in prayer; with its long fair hair carefully parted in folds on either side, crowned with fresh and dewy flowers.

It was midnight; the funeral rites were over; and by the now dimly-lighted altar there remained only the Abbess and Leonora.

"My love!" exclaimed the Abbess, "would I could see thee weep!"

"Mother," replied the girl, "I have no tears!—I am glad of it—they are the common expression of a common grief, and mine is not so. Had my mother *only* died, even in the prime of her blameless life, I would have bowed to the dispensation!

—I would have *wept!* but she has died of a broken heart!—and the wretch who broke it—the heretic compound of treachery, ingratitude, and cruelty, yet lives!—lives in affluence, rioting on the patrimony of which he despoiled her!—lives in the favor of the world!—lives in the bosom of domestic felicity! Through all this, safe as he may think himself, and guarded though he may be, this feeble hand shall reach him!”

“Wouldst thou murder him?”

“Murder him! take away his paltry life at a single and scarce felt blow!—No, no! that would be poor revenge indeed! I will *break his heart*—slowly and gradually shall it break, as *her's* has broken!”

“Leonora!” exclaimed the terrified Abbess.

“Speak not to me, it is in vain! Am I not *now* the Countess de Rosenberg?—I will attack the usurper of my rights. Am I not the sole child of my murdered parent?—I will avenge her on the murderer. Am I not a member of the persecuted and insulted Church of Rome?—I will destroy the heretics, root and branch. You think me mad, but I am not mad: at this moment I see a vision you cannot see—it is a bloody hand beckoning me on—I come!—I come!” She rushed by the Abbess with glaring eyes and outstretched arms, but fell motionless and insensible on the threshold of the chapel. The Abbess watched by Leonora's bed during the night; she slept, or seemed to sleep, and in the morning rose calm and collected. From that fatal crisis, Leonora was a Monomaniac. Upon the subject of revenge on the Baron de Ravenstein, her ideas of right and wrong (clear upon all other topics) were confounded. The revenge she meditated not only appeared to her justifiable, but she believed it to be her paramount duty on earth. She imagined that in the stillness of night, spirits of her parents floated with suppli-

cating and unearthly moanings round her couch, and that their forms became visibly present when the pale moonlight beamed into her solitary chamber.

Having devoted herself to one great object, she did all she could to exclude from her heart such natural sympathies as might interfere with it. She admitted no confidential friendship; of love she believed herself incapable, and in the present state of her mind, she was so; of pity, she had none for her intended victim, or for those who in any way stood between her and him. In outward appearance, Leonora changed but little: the softness of her voice, the remarkable gentleness of her manner, and the exquisite beauty of her smile, remained. But deadly and unchanging was her paleness, and morbid the fixedness of her eye, which ever and anon seemed to assume the stony appearance of that of a statue.

Those fearful secret societies, which have at different times, and for different purposes, existed in Germany, were at this moment rife among the zealous Catholics for the maintenance of their tottering church. One of them had been some time since formed near Rostock, and it was Leonora's first step to become *initiated*. She informed the Abbess of her wish, who immediately summoned the bishop of the diocese, her friend and relative, to consult upon it. "Permit her, my Lady Abbess," he said; "she is doubtless an ordained instrument of wrath. Harm she *can* do to no one but herself, and good she *may* do to the great cause, for which we ought all to glory in martyrdom. Let her become one of the initiated—and then, I say again, she must be permitted to follow her own path without question or interruption."

And Leonora became one of the initiated. In a cavern by the sea-side, in the dead of night, surrounded by shrouded and mysterious forms, the red torch-light glancing on naked swords and instruments of torture, confusedly mingled with

the holy symbols of our peaceful and merciful religion, did Leonora, on her bended knees, pronounce the terrible oaths that bound her, body and soul, to the service of this dread tribunal; and on its fatal scroll, with unshrinking hand, she traced her name in her blood. The ceremony was concluded by her being taught certain mystical signs and phrases, by which, in any company, and under any circumstances, the members of the Vehmique recognised each other.

Her next point was to gain admittance into the castle of Rosenberg. She had several plans in contemplation for this purpose, when an occurrence took place which saved her the risk of their execution.

On a hawking excursion, in which several knights and ladies were engaged from the castle, a young pair, for reasons best known to themselves, had wandered from the rest. Ernest de Willenfeld, the eldest son of the Austrian Count, De Willenfeld, (a Catholic branch of the Baroness de Ravenstein's family), was the knight; and the beautiful Eugenia de Ravenstein was the lady. So deeply were they interested in each other, and so little were they thinking about hawks and herons, when they ought to have been thinking about nothing else, that they unexpectedly found themselves close to the convent walls.

"Where *have* we got to!" exclaimed Eugenia; "near this ominous and gloomy prison, I declare! How melancholy it looks! not a living thing to be seen but yon slight veiled form upon the battlement! It seems to watch us—come, come away!" she continued, as De Willenfeld drew up his horse, and said in a tone of deep interest, while making the sign of the cross, "This, then, is the venerable convent of St. Hilda!"

"Pardon me!" said Eugenia, "I forgot that you were what I wish my parents could forget as easily as I sometimes do!" She sighed, and a tear sprung to her eye.

“Be of good cheer, my loved Eugenia!—true affection like ours, in the end must conquer all obstacles; and there is but *one* between *us*—the difference of our religious faith. To you and me it is as a grain of sand, but to our parents, alas! it is as a mountain of granite.”

They had turned their horses' heads; Eugenia, wrapt in thought, held her rein carelessly; her palfrey started at something he perceived, or fancied he perceived; he sprang aside, and the road being stony, and uneven, he and his fair burthen fell together. The whole was the work of a moment; and in another moment Ernest held in his arms the bleeding and apparently lifeless body of his Eugenia. The veiled figure they had noticed, at that instant descended from its station, the convent gates were opened, and instant relief afforded. Eugenia was gently conveyed within, placed in bed, and her wounds, which were severe about the head, neck, and arms, were judiciously and carefully dressed: an opiate was then administered, and Ernest, when assured that she slept, left the convent to convey the melancholy intelligence to her parents. The Baron was somewhat startled at learning the place of refuge to which his daughter had been consigned, and listened doubtingly and uneasily to Ernest's assurances that she was most kindly and most ably attended to.

“It is impossible!” exclaimed the Baron, “that any of *us* can pass the threshold of that temple of antichrist. Send for our leech—she must be removed.” The leech was accordingly dispatched, accompanied by Ernest, and the brother of Eugenia, Oscar de Ravenstein; the latter, however, in compliance with his father's recommendation, remaining outside the convent walls.

About a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and Oscar began to be impatient for intelligence of his sister, when there issued from the gate a young lady, attended by two elderly lay-

sisters. She was arrayed in deep mourning, which advantageously contrasted with the dazzling fairness of her complexion; the exquisite delicacy of her shape, and the lightness of her step, became her extreme youth, (he could not suppose she was more than seventeen, if so much); but there was a dignity in her demeanour, and a thoughtful and grave expression in the noble contour of her features and head, which seemed to indicate a riper age. He dismounted, and taking off his plumed hat, advanced to meet her.

"Sir knight," she said, in sweet yet penetrating accents, "the Abbess of St. Hilda expresses through me her regret, that under the present circumstances, you should deem it requisite to abide without the walls of her convent, within which your suffering sister has been so tenderly and hospitably received. What do you fear, sir knight?"

Oscar's blood rushed to his brow: "Fair lady, do me the justice to believe that I am acting in compliance with the wishes of those who have a right to expect their wishes to be complied with, and in direct opposition to my own."

"In that case," replied Leonora, "your sister's wishes ought also to have their weight, and she most anxiously desires to see you."

"Dispose of me as you will," gallantly replied the admiring Oscar, "and lead me whither you will." Leonora answered only by one of her own peculiar smiles; and while it lighted up her features, Oscar thought he had never seen a face so beautiful.

Through many a long and silent corridor, which echoed faintly even Leonora's light foot-fall, they proceeded to the stranger's apartments, where Eugenia reposed. She was in bed, wrapped in shawls, her long hair of glossy brown escaping the broad ribbon which carefully bound her head; she looked pale and languid, but there was an expression of happiness it

was difficult to account for, until it was observed, that while the doctor and nurse had their backs turned, busily engaged in preparing and compounding, Ernest had crept to the bedside, and was on his knees, clasping her little delicate hand, and covering it with kisses. On the appearance of Leonora with Oscar, the hand was instantly withdrawn, and Ernest, ensconcing himself in the folds of a thick damask curtain, managed to sidle off towards the doctor and nurse, unobserved by the brother, but not escaping the watchful eye of Leonora.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Oscar, as he tenderly embraced his sister, "that you are no worse!"

"That I am so much better," replied Eugenia, "you may thank, next to Providence, this dear and amiable young lady. It is she who has since watched over me with the tenderness of a sister;—how I wish that, indeed, I were blessed with such a sister!"

Oscar turned towards Leonora, and half bending on his knee, ventured to take her hand and press it to his lips: another of Leonora's beautiful smiles, and then she glided away, apparently to leave the party to settle their own plans unrestrained by her presence.

In spite of the impatience of the Baron, it was impossible to remove Eugenia for a week. Her parents communicated with her only through Oscar, who was regularly accompanied in his daily visits by Ernest. That daily visit was looked forward to by the four concerned in it with equally pleasurable anxiety, though with varying feelings. Love lay like Hope in Pandora's box, at the bottom of the hearts of three; but what was it that lay so hushed, yet full of life, at the heart of the fourth?

The spell had reached even Ernest; especially when the Abbess related that but three months since, Leonora had become an orphan; that she was now a friendless dependant

on the charity of the convent, (for so it appears the good lady was tutored to speak); that she declined for the present becoming a member of the sisterhood from conscientious motives, not considering herself sufficiently resolved and prepared.

"Permit me, madam," said Oscar, "to ask one question: is she of noble birth?"

"Yes, she is; but she belongs to a family of fallen fortunes, and, for the present at least, it is deemed advisable to call her by no other name than that of Leonora."

This account, by throwing a certain degree of romance and mystery round the already too interesting girl, increased the affection of her new friends; and Oscar and Eugenia, in all the generous and confiding simplicity of youth, consulted together as to how they should prevail on their parents to admit her as an inmate to the castle.

First they spoke to Leonora herself upon the subject; and she received the proposal with so natural a look of surprise, hope, and pleasure, that a veil was at once and for ever thrown, even over the keen eyes of Ernest.

It was agreed that Oscar should not appear too forward in the affair, and it was left almost entirely in the hands of Eugenia. So well did she succeed in removing all objections, and so eloquently did she plead the cause of the young and dependant orphan, that her fond parents at length gave their consent.

Just a fortnight after Eugenia had left the convent, the equipage of the Baron de Ravenstein arrived there for Leonora, and seated by the side of his daughter, she entered the territories of Rosenberg.

It was a clear autumn evening; the foliage was just tinged with the rich colors of the season, but had not yet fallen into "the sere and yellow leaf." With what sensations did the

heart of Leonora throb as each successive novelty met her view, or engrossed her attention! The busy and populous village, the numerous armed retainers, the young knights and esquires prancing about on their steeds as duty or inclination led them; the long ancient avenues, and lastly, the magnificent castle, with its turrets and its towers; its extensive moat and drawbridge, over which the heavy vehicle thundered along, and passing beneath the dark and formidable portcullis, drew up at the principal entrance from the first court, surrounded by all the array of guards and domestics. Leonora scarcely breathed; she had completely trained herself for this, and the succeeding scenes; but it was difficult, very difficult, to suppress her strong emotion. She felt as if the blood of all her race boiled in every vein—an unknown and nameless dependant on the usurper of Rosenberg, did its countess, for the first time, pass the threshold of her fathers! The maniac fit—she felt it—it was coming strong upon her. She drew her veil down tightly, she closed her eyes, set her teeth, and pressed her clenched hands to her heart; with one low and stifled groan, the crisis passed.

As soon as they had alighted, Eugenia affectionately drew Leonora's arm through her's, and conducted her to the flower-garden, where the Baroness and her ladies then were. The Baroness having saluted her daughter, turned to the stranger, and extended her hand; Leonora, according to the custom of her assumed station, knelt on one knee, and kissed it; after which the Baroness graciously addressed her, assured her of her kind feelings and intentions towards her, and curtsying slightly, moved onward. The female attendants saluted, with apparent kindness, their new associate, and then the delighted Eugenia accompanied her favorite to the small apartment next her own, which she had carefully prepared for her. Here the two ladies changed their dresses, and with a timid step, but

firm and composed feelings, Leonora soon after entered with Eugenia the lighted hall, where every eye was turned upon her. When she raised her own, she first met those of Oscar, and her look of grateful recognition went to his heart. In a few minutes Oscar approached her with *him* who was all the world to Leonora, the sole object of her thoughts, and cares, and hopes, her occupation, her passion, her fate ! Yes, Rudolf de Ravenstein was her fate, but she also was his.

They met, and the most beautiful smile that Oscar had yet beheld, brightened in the eyes and played round the mouth of Leonora. It won the Baron : he took her hand between his, and assured her of his friendship ; she returned the friendly pressure, while she replied, "I thank you, my lord ; and do not think I flatter if I say that this hour is the happiest of my life."

The first object of Leonora, in her new position, was to secure the general good-will of all around, and the affection of a particular few. In these points she succeeded beyond her expectations : she melted into kindness even the cold and stately Baroness, and with the Baron she became, from the first moment, a decided favorite. She seemed to possess for him a singular power of fascination, such as that attributed to the rattle-snake. She resembled her father more than her mother, but was not strikingly like either ; her voice, however, was her mother's, and sometimes the Baron would start suddenly and look round upon her, as though her soft low tones had called up some distant and painful recollection.

Among the household, Leonora observed one grave elderly domestic, named Anselmo ; remarkable for his regular attendance and devout attention at prayers, his sober demeanor, and exemplary performance of his duties ; but she observed a sly and cautious watchfulness of look, and that look was frequently and intently fixed on herself. Early one morning they chanced

to meet in a secluded shrubbery ; he stopped when he saw her and looked carefully round, and then slowly advanced ; he made no obeisance, but drew himself up in front of her, and eyeing her sternly and steadily, made the sign of the dreaded Vehmique. For a moment Leonora was startled, and recoiled, but immediately recovered herself, and answered the sign. From that moment they understood each other, and she was overjoyed to find within her reach, a co-adjutor so powerful, and so devoted.

The passion of Oscar de Ravenstein for the beautiful stranger, in spite of himself, and of every wise and prudential motive he could summon to his aid, increased daily. Leonora, with the most consummate art, veiled by the most perfect simplicity, fanned the forbidden flame, while she herself was as inaccessible to it as adamant.

It was of course well known that she was a Catholic ; but still, she attended with such meek attention to the lectures of the Lutheran preacher, that the Baroness took upon herself the task and merit of her conversion ; which had the effect of interesting her, more than any thing else could have done, in her youthful protégé.

It was not long before Eugenia reposed in the apparently sympathising bosom of her friend, the secret of her love for Ernest de Willenfeld, and her despair at the apparently insurmountable obstacle that opposed it. Leonora first probed gently, and by degrees, Eugenia's own sentiments upon the form of worship her parents had adopted ; and perceived that love would find it no difficult matter to lead the young heretic within the pale of the Catholic church.

"If," said Leonora to Ernest, "your beloved Eugenia could be converted to the true religion, much of the difficulty that embarrasses you would cease. Would you not both be happier in the profession of the same faith?—would not such an

union in your religious sentiments be of the utmost benefit to your children and dependants? Rest assured, that a division on this first of all considerations in your family, would ultimately become the source of much dissension and misery. Your military duties here will cease in a few weeks; you must part from your Eugenia, probably for ever; or if you again meet her, it may only be as the wife of another."

"O Leonora!" exclaimed the suffering Ernest, "do not plunge me in despair! what do you propose in the event of her becoming a Catholic?"

"I propose an immediate and secret marriage."

"You are my guardian angel!" cried Ernest, as he sank on his knees before her.

A week after this deeply interesting conversation, the chapel of St. Hilda was dimly lighted at midnight; the Bishop and two officiating priests stood at the altar; the Abbess and two venerable nuns knelt at their devotions; and a monkish figure, whose cowl being partly thrown back discovered the features of Anselmo, watched anxiously at the door. Rustling footsteps were at length heard along the dark and wide corridor; the females rose from their knees, and every eye turned eagerly to the entrance: two shrouded forms emerged from the gloom;—Ernest carrying, rather than supporting, the trembling Eugenia. They were followed by another, thickly veiled, whose step was firm, and mien composed,—this was Leonora.

Ernest placed his burthen on the step of the altar; the females hastened to remove her veil, and untie her scarf; Leonora chafed her temples, and the Abbess applied her restorative essence. Not a word was spoken. At length the colour faintly visited the cheek and lip of the poor victim: her eyes opened, but she closed them instantly, with a deep and struggling sigh when she beheld the *appareil* before her.

"Eugenia!" whispered Ernest, "my own Eugenia, be firm, I conjure you! wherefore this emotion? Am *I* not near you my love?—what do you fear? Eugenia, we must live and die together."

"We must," she faltered out, "and we—we will!"

A few natural tears she shed, then struggled successfully for some degree of composure. "I—I am—ready."

Ernest and Leonora tenderly raised her; the Bishop resumed his station, and taking the joined hands of the kneeling Eugenia between his own, solemnly spoke the form of recantation, which was repeated, sentence for sentence, by the infatuated girl. When it was finished, the Bishop signed the cross upon her forehead with holy water, and laying his hands upon her head, blessed her fervently; then presented her to the Abbess, who likewise blessed her, and fastened to her girdle a splendid rosary. From Leonora and the attendant nuns, she received the kiss of sisterhood and peace.

For this last purpose, Leonora partially removed her veil, instantly and closely replacing it; for she felt that the expression of her countenance was uncontrollable.

In a few minutes more Eugenia was the bride of him she loved "not wisely, but too well."

"Remember!" whispered Leonora, as they left the chapel, and holding up her warning finger to Ernest: "Remember your promise!"

The young bridegroom coloured deeply, and with brows slightly knit, cast down his flashing eyes. She had made the youthful and enamoured couple give her a verbal promise, and not a very solemn one, that the rites of marriage should, for the present, end with its ceremony. Did Leonora depend for the fruition of her schemes on the observance of such a promise as this?—far from it.

Their plans were so well arranged and executed, that they

all reached their apartments in the castle without alarm or observation; and on the following morning the adventure appeared as a dream; the only trace it seemed to leave was a more than usual joyousness in the eye of Ernest.

The health of the Baroness was somewhat declining, and latterly she had been troubled with a restless watchfulness during the night. To alleviate this distressing symptom, several measures were resorted to; and among others, that of being read to in the earlier part of the night. Leonora, like most persons who are any way mentally afflicted, was an unquiet sleeper, and she therefore offered her services as reader, assuring the Baroness that she herself would probably find great advantage from the exercise. By degrees it was thought better to establish a small bed for Leonora in the Baroness's room, so that at last she merely used her first apartment, adjoining that of Eugenia, as a dressing-room. This final arrangement, Leonora managed should take place about ten or twelve days after the clandestine marriage, and she smiled as she observed, that no other female attendant was called upon by Eugenia to occupy her place.

A few weeks glided away, and the time for Ernest's departure approached. It was settled that Oscar de Ravenstein should accompany him to Vienna.

The day arrived; poor Eugenia sat in her apartment dissolved in tears. The Baron and all his retainers were assembled to take leave of the young heir. Oscar, accompanied by his friend, first went to the apartments of the Baroness, to receive her maternal blessing and farewell: they then proceeded to those of Eugenia; as they entered, Leonora, apparently from motives of delicacy, withdrew to the adjoining room; and, as she expected, Oscar immediately followed her, leaving his sister and Ernest together, both of them too much absorbed to notice his retreat otherwise than as giving them a favorable opportunity of making unobserved their last adieu.

"Leonora," said Oscar, as he closed the door and took her hand, "we are about to part." She sighed, and looked down, then after a moment's pause, said in a tremulous voice:—

"You feel painfully your departure from your family, and we all feel it too; but, my lord, you are merely setting out on an agreeable and interesting tour; in a short time, we shall, I trust, see you again—a year, or two, at the very furthest."

"Leonora, before I go, grant me a favor, and ease my mind of a weighty burthen!"

"Speak, my lord, what do you mean?"

"Tell me *who* you are!"

"Wherefore do you ask, and at such a moment as this?"

"Because, Leonora, I love you,—passionately, honorably love you! If you are born my equal, (and from what the Abbess hinted, I presume you are), I shall transgress no duty in plighting my faith to you, and entreating you to give me hope that you may one day become the Baroness de Ravenstein."

Leonora recoiled and shuddered.

"How is this?" he continued; "I had hoped I was not indifferent to you, far less an object of abhorrence, as your gesture seems to signify."

Leonora, by a violent effort, recovered herself: she felt that all depended on that moment. "You misunderstand me: could you, Oscar, read my heart, you would find there any thing but indifference. There is no obstacle of birth between us; my family is, (may I say it without offence?) more ancient and more noble than your own; but I am at this moment, for reasons I will hereafter relate to you, bound to secrecy and disguise. Do not attempt to penetrate them, but rely on my word! There is, however, another barrier between us, which I much fear, will not be so easily displaced. I am a Catholic."

"Not a very rigid or intolerant one," observed Oscar.

"Perhaps not, but my resolution is unalterable. I will



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never marry a heretic: nay, do not frown! I ask not, Oscar, I expect not, that on this important topic you should be swayed by anything but conviction. Ernest de Willenfeld, your relative, and bosom friend, is a Catholic; you are about to visit a Catholic country, and to mix with the magnates of the land; the great, the good, and the wise, they are almost all Catholics: enquire, think, and judge for yourself. The Church has her frailties; treat them with the tenderness due to those of a mother, and do not shut your eyes to the horrible excesses of her rebellious children. Finally, if you become a Catholic *in your heart*, it will be sufficient for me; I shall require no public declaration, and should be the last to desire that even the prejudices of your parents should be wounded on this point. When I am satisfied, Oscar, that such a change has taken place in your religious sentiments, you shall know who I am; and the unknown and dependent girl, will feel a pride equal to her affection, when bestowing her title and possessions, as well as her hand and heart, on one whose pure, noble, and disinterested attachment deserves a throne."

The fine figure of Leonora drew up as she spoke, her eye was full of fire, and nobility seemed stamped upon her brow. Oscar knelt and clasped her hand; she leant over him, and her long fair locks fell on his neck; their lips met, and for a moment she was folded in his embrace. The memory of that intoxicating moment never left him. Leonora intended that it never should.

"I will not kill both body and soul," repeated the half-relenting maniac, as she listened to the receding steps of her victim. "No, his soul shall live, and we will all meet, where we may all be happy. I wish I could weep! if it were but one tear to cool these burning eye-balls! My father, frown not on me!—my mother, turn not away thy gentle head!—forgive this passing weakness!—it is already over."

After the departure of Oscar and Ernest, Eugenia drooped like a broken flower. A presentiment of evil hung over her; the consciousness of having acted wrong subdued her; the pang of absence, and the uncertainty of the future, oppressed her. Her parents and friends grew uneasy on the subject of her health, and everything was done to restore it: exercise and amusements were encouraged, and the tenderest care surrounded her. In the midst of all, her misery reached its climax: the appalling truth, vainly, and for a length of time, suppressed and disregarded, at last forced itself upon her conviction. In four months more she would become a mother.

She knew not in whom to place her confidence, nor where to turn for advice, assistance, or sympathy; she dared not even look at Leonora, whose eye she imagined was sometimes fixed upon her with a scrutiny and severity that made her tremble; she thought, too, that latterly, Leonora's manner had been less affectionate, and in her present nervous state, she conceived a sort of dread of her, out of which she vainly attempted to reason herself. However, time advanced; she had reached the seventh month of her pregnancy, and she resolved, at this dangerous period, to throw herself upon her knees, and to confess to Leonora her situation. Alas! the agitation which she suffered in bringing herself to this determination, the means she had resorted to, to conceal the alteration in her appearance, her extreme terror at the apparently inextricable labyrinth of misery in which she had so heedlessly involved herself, all contributed to bring on a fatal crisis.

Leonora's watchful eye had been constantly upon her; not to avert her fate, but to mark its progress. One evening, in passing through Eugenia's room, from her dressing-room, in order to proceed for the night to the Baroness's apartment; Leonora paused, as usual, for a moment, to wish Eugenia good night. The poor girl had dismissed her attendant, and was half reclining, half kneeling, by her bed-side with her missal

and rosary: she looked alarmingly ill; she turned and gave her hand to Leonora. "To-morrow," she said, slowly—"to-morrow, come to my room early, dear Leonora! I have something to tell you—very important, and very, very melancholy."

"My dear Eugenia," replied Leonora, with more of tenderness than she had lately assumed; "I would remain with you now, and hear what you have to tell, but you know your mother is waiting for me; however, to-morrow morning rely on my being early with you. Good night, my love."

Leonora kissed her cheek, and Eugenia faintly whispered; "Good night."

"The weather is cold," said Leonora, half aloud, to herself, as though even from herself she would have concealed her purpose; and as she spoke, she carefully closed both the massive doors of the large anti-chamber, which separated Eugenia's bed-room from that of her immediate attendants, two young women who were already sound asleep; she proceeded, carefully closing every door. She took her station as usual, by the Baroness, and as usual read her to repose; she then threw herself upon her bed, but she could not sleep; she prayed fervently, and her prayer was, that the spirit of Eugenia might depart that night; and that it might, without passing through purgatory, be received at once into eternal blessedness. And her parents seemed to stand at each end of the couch, and they smiled upon her as she prayed: nevertheless, the cold drops gathered on her forehead, as she thought of Eugenia, alone, in suffering, and in death. "This is a bitter hour, but it will pass, for *her* it may have passed already. Heaven grant it!" She hid her face, and stopt her ears, as though the cry of agony could reach her; and thus she remained immovable for about two hours. The cock crew, she lifted up her wild and haggard face, the faint dawn just glimmered in at the window; she rose, and sullenly muttered,

"Whatever was ordained, by this time is accomplished." And laying herself down, closed her eyes.

As soon as the distant hum and stir, gave notice that the earlier part of the inhabitants of the castle were up, Leonora rose; the Baroness still slept. Wrapping herself in her dressing-gown, she left the room, and proceeded softly along the corridor. She found the two young women still buried in unbroken sleep; she awoke them, (as she had frequently done before), and told them it was time to rise. She then, with a calm step, but a beating heart, passed through the anti-room, where a small lamp still burned, and entered the apartment of Eugenia. It was quite dark, and the curtains were closed round the bed: in spite of herself, she breathed more freely as she opened the shutter; it appeared to her that no material change could have taken place, and with an assured hand she drew aside the curtains. The form of Eugenia was visible beneath the bed clothing, but her hands only were to be seen above it, and they were clenched. Leonora touched one of them—it was deadly cold: with a desperate effort she partially removed the covering—her worst fears, and her worst hopes were fulfilled! There lay Eugenia, in the stillness of death! her contracted features, starting eyes, and lips bitten until they had bled, told of extreme agony, and its fatal suppression. Across her bosom, lay her immature and dead infant.

A loud shriek burst from Leonora; she rushed back to the apartment of the attendants, throwing herself upon the floor, and uttering cry after cry; terror seized upon the two girls, and running from Eugenia's room, instead of to it, they spread amazement and fear over the castle. In a few minutes the chamber of misery was filled; and not even the entrance of the unfortunate father could subdue the tumult that arose from the horror-struck assembly.

The death of the young and beloved Eugenia!—her sudden

death!—the Catholic emblems that surrounded her!—the child!

It was some hours before the mind of any individual became in the smallest degree composed. The Baron had hid his face in the pillow of his departed child; and the deep groan that shook his whole frame, from time to time, was the only symptom he gave of life. The Baroness had been forcibly detained from the heart-rending spectacle, and her tears and wailings were responded to by every bosom. By her, Leonora took her station, still in her wrapper, bare-footed, her long hair falling over her lividly pale face, and with her large, fixed, and stony eye, looking the image of despair; whereas, the truth was, she felt nothing,—she thought of nothing; there was in her mind a temporary blank. Towards evening, the Baron expressed a wish of seeing his wife; and every one was requested to leave her, excepting Leonora: her apartment was mostly in shade, but where the bed stood; it was faintly illumined by the departing and uncertain twilight. The Baron entered, supported by two of his most confidential friends; he looked as if twenty years had passed over him in that single day. He sank by the bed-side; the gentlemen withdrew to the further end of the apartment. A choked, and agonizing whispering passed between the bereaved parents. Leonora remained almost enveloped in the curtain; the sight of the Baron roused all the demon in her soul, and a thrill of fiendish joy passed over it. A slight movement caused the Baron to look up; he started back—"Who is that?" he exclaimed; "Spirit of Evil—avaunt!"

Leonora disengaged herself from the curtain, and without seeming to mark his adjuration, with a countenance completely changed, and composed, leant over the bed, and taking the hand of the Baroness, kissed it affectionately.

"Heaven preserve my senses!" ejaculated the Baron: "It is but Leonora! yet, was there nothing—no one with thee?"

"No one, my dear lord," replied Leonora; "pray compose yourself!"

"I will—I must—I ought—or else!"—he struck his forehead but still kept his eyes fixed upon the yet involved curtain: "I will pray—pray for submission and composure—pray that I may never again imagine so horrible a vision!"

During that evening, a short but important conference took place between Leonora and Anselmo; the result was, that he quitted the castle privately, and was early the next day on his road to Vienna.

Order and composure were, in some degree, restored on the following morning. The shrouded remains of the once happy, and lovely girl were laid, with those of her mysterious infant, on a bed of state; and the richly embroidered velvet pall, tasselled, and fringed with gold, and displaying the coronet and arms of Ravenstein, covered the last and the fairest of the daughters of that house. The chamber was hung with black, closed from the light of day, but brilliantly illuminated within; prayers were constantly said, or psalms sung; and the regularly renewed watchers took their solemn post, with more of sincere grief than is generally found at the funeral ceremonies of the great.

The drawbridge was up, the gates were closed, and the colours lowered. The black-robed domestics crept softly, and mutely, about the merely necessary duties of the day; and, save the occasional chaunt from the chamber of death, and the measured step of the centinel, not a sound was heard through its huge building and its courts, though all alive with inhabitants.

And the Abbess of St. Hilda and the Bishop smiled as they paced their distant terrace, and looked on Rosenberg.

Reclining on a couch, in his private apartment, and enveloped in his mourning cloak, lay the Baron; at a small table near him sat the seneschal, and a few principal persons,

examining those whom they thought likely to be able to throw some light on the melancholy mystery. After the two female attendants had been questioned, Leonora was introduced; she gave her testimony coolly, and with precision; it amounted merely to what they had already heard, or seen. The following questions, were then put to her, while the Baron half raised himself, and fixed his eyes searchingly upon her: "You are a Catholic?"

Leonora hesitatingly replied, "I was educated as such."

"And, therefore, you *are* a Catholic?"

"I would rather not answer that question, simply because, I scarcely feel myself competent to answer it: for I am free to confess that the kind instructions of the Baroness, and the forcible arguments, and impressive eloquence of this reverend gentleman," (bowing modestly to the Lutheran preacher), "have caused me somewhat to waver in the faith of my ancestors."

"You were the bosom friend of the lamented lady Eugenia. Have you no suspicion as to who was the father of the child?"

Leonora seemed much distressed, and remained silent.

"Leonora!" exclaimed the Baron, "answer, I command you!"

"I have no certainty."

"But you have a suspicion—you are bound to declare it."

"Well, then," continued Leonora, with an apparent effort, "my suspicion rests on Ernest de Willenfeld."

The truth seemed to strike the Baron like a flash of lightning; he started to his feet: "'Tis he! 'tis he!" he wildly exclaimed; "that abhorred son of Antichrist! He has destroyed my child—body and soul he has destroyed her!"

To increase, if possible, his sufferings, a deputation arrived on that day from the convent of St. Hilda. A parley was held across the moat, (for the Baron refused an order for the

drawbridge to be let down), and the warder asked the unusual and unwelcome visitors, in no very courteous terms, what they wanted? he was replied to by a loud clear-voiced priest, stating that the fact, of the lady Eugenia de Ravenstein having returned to the bosom of Holy Church, and having died in the true faith, had been made known by common report to the lady Abbess of St. Hilda, who had commissioned the deputation to demand her body, that it might be buried in consecrated ground, and according to the sacred rites of her professed faith. It was well the drawbridge was not down, or the friars would, probably, never have returned with an answer to their message; as it was, a furious discharge of missiles of every sort, that could be found at hand, was the only reply they received; and the monks were forced to make a retreat, more hasty than dignified.

The obsequies of the ill-fated Eugenia were performed with all due solemnity and magnificence, but they were marked by three peculiarities: first, the absence of those affecting testimonies which attend a young maiden to the grave; she was buried as a matron;—secondly, a prayer was put up by the priest for pardon for the fearful transgressions of which she had been guilty; and this prayer was ordered to be repeated within the castle, at public and private worship daily, for the space of twelve months;—the third peculiarity was, that a funeral service was performed for her in the Catholic chapel of St. Hilda, at the same time as that in the Lutheran castle; and masses were ordered to be read for her soul, at stated intervals, also during the following twelve months.

After the funeral, a deputation was despatched to Oscar de Ravenstein, at Vienna, to inform him of all the melancholy circumstances that had taken place, and pointing out to him Ernest de Willenfeld as their author. The castle then sank into a quiet gloom, and the unhappy parents were left to

deplore in privacy the loss of their young, their only, and beloved daughter; and what was quite as difficult to be borne, the public disgrace which had attended that loss, and which was gradually becoming the theme of conversation all over Germany.

Leonora devoted herself to the Baroness, who, enfeebled by previous ill health, never recovered the shock she had sustained, but declined certainly and rapidly. The conduct of Leonora was regulated with so much prudence, and such exquisite tact, that the slight suspicion, which had for a moment rested on the mind of the Baron, entirely disappeared, and she became more trusted and more loved than ever.

Anselmo had prosecuted his journey with all possible speed. On his arrival at Vienna, he proceeded instantly to the residence of the young heir of Ravenstein, whom he was fortunate enough to find at home and alone. Almost unannounced he made his way into the apartment, covered with dust, and apparently worn with fatigue and anxiety.

"My dear young master!" he exclaimed, as he clasped his hands and dropped on one knee before him, "I trust you will forgive the over-zeal of your faithful servant, but I could not sleep another night in my bed at Rosenberg while you were here, ignorant of the dreadful event that had occurred, and perhaps in friendly companionship with its infamous author!"

Oscar, full of apprehension, raised the old man, seated him, and having made him swallow a cup of wine, listened to his narrative with feelings impossible to describe.

After a short consultation, the following note was despatched to Ernest:—

"Meet me to-morrow morning in the wood of —, at five o'clock, armed. OSCAR DE RAVENSTEIN."

He then wrote a short note to his man of business, saying that he was unexpectedly obliged to take his instant departure

for Rosenberg, and giving directions as to the discharge of his servants, and settlement of his affairs at Vienna. This done, he shut himself up in his room, leaving Anselmo to superintend the packing of all things necessary, and the forwarding them a stage from Vienna that night.

The bearer of the note to Ernest met him on his way to Oscar's residence. He read the note with a start of astonishment and of *terror*, for he felt that Eugenia must be in some way connected with this mysterious assignation: he was too much, however, a man of honor, (according to the usual acceptation of that term), to question the motives of his antagonist anywhere but on the field. He drew a ring from his finger, in token of his having received the note, and his intention to fulfil the appointment; and with a heavy heart Ernest turned his step homewards.

At the hour named both were on the spot; Oscar was attended by Anselmo. As soon as the antagonists came in sight of each other, they dismounted and advanced.

"Wretch!" exclaimed the infuriated Oscar, "how dares thine eye meet mine! My sister lies with her and thine unhallowed offspring in her grave—thou art her murderer!"

"I am, indeed!" ejaculated the horror-struck Ernest.

"Defend thyself then, traitor!"

Ernest feebly raised his sword, and in the next instant that of Oscar transfixed his heart.

Thus was struck down the only hand that could, or rather would, have lifted the veil from Leonora; thus also was laid the immediate foundation of Oscar's own fate.

Oscar and his attendant rode off with all speed on their way to Rosenberg. On the third day's journey they met the messenger from thence, who turned back with them, and together they proceeded to the castle.

The meeting of Oscar with his parents was deeply affecting;

nevertheless it was lightened by a ray of joy at what they conceived the just as well as speedy vengeance taken by their son. Anselmo was praised and rewarded.

The great alteration in his mother painfully struck Oscar: that her end was fast approaching could not be concealed, either from her friends, or from herself.

Leonora was Oscar's sole source of hope and consolation. At such a time as this he thought not of *love*; but the gratitude and admiration with which he marked her apparent tender and unremitting assiduity to his mother, replacing, as far as in her lay, the daughter she had been so cruelly bereaved of; the careful and judicious manner in which, young as she was, she regulated the female part of the household (the Baroness having entrusted it to her superintendence); her seeming devotion to his father, by whom, in return, she was far more highly prized than any person had yet been out of his own immediate family; her gentleness, submission and fortitude, all tended to confirm the impression Oscar had conceived, and the resolution he had taken.

It was occasion of surprise that the Baron de Ravenstein, generally considered a cold harsh man, should be so completely overwhelmed by the blow he had received. Alas! "conscience makes cowards of us all:" it was the conscience of Ravenstein, so long hushed to sleep by the caresses of fortune, that now awoke within him; he thought that the long suspended sword of justice had fallen on his devoted head, that the chastising hand of Heaven was upon him. The form of her, whose pure and fervent love he had so artfully won, and so basely requited—the form of Agatha de Rosenberg, the injured and the innocent, haunted his soul: that night of guilty horror, in which the castle of her father was stormed, rose in supernatural clearness to his memory, and dwelt there, and would not depart. Again he felt the venerable

Count struggling to free himself from his young and vigorous grasp, while his savage father dealt the fatal blow: he saw the grey hairs of his noble victim dabbled in blood, each rising up against him and calling for vengeance. In what obscure spot had Agatha laid down her young and gentle head to die?—what had become of her innocent and orphan child, whose roof at this moment sheltered him, and whose ample domains yielded their riches to his hand? But wherefore on Eugenia should the thunder-bolt of Heaven's fury first fall? Alas! who can read its inscrutable decrees? "The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children to the third and fourth generation," repeated the sufferer.

It is to be observed, that the name of the former lords of Rosenberg had not been mentioned within its walls for years; neither Oscar nor Eugenia had ever known any thing concerning them; they had merely believed that on the extinction of that ancient family, the domain had passed, partly by purchase, into the hands of their grandfather.

In less than two months after the return of Oscar, the Baroness de Ravenstein breathed her last; and the renewal of grief, and of the ceremonials of mourning, again darkened the halls of Rosenberg.

A few days after this event, Leonora timidly requested, in the presence of Oscar, to know the Baron's intentions towards her, and whether it would not be desirable, under existing circumstances, that she should return to the protection of the Abbess of St. Hilda.

"Do not leave us, Leonora," replied the Baron, as she had expected; "stay yet a little in our house of mourning. Your situation requires a degree of consideration that I have not yet indeed been capable of giving it: besides," he continued musingly, "I require information about you, which I suppose the Abbess alone can accurately supply; all this time we

know you but as *Leonora*. At all events, stay—stay for the present. In a short time, I trust, I shall be able to attend to this, and many other important matters that press upon me.” Leonora kissed his hand, and without looking at Oscar, retired.

That evening another ominous conference was held between Leonora and Anselmo.

“There is but one blow more to strike,” she said, “and all is over—my mission is accomplished!”

“Is the time ripe?” he humbly asked.

She replied, “Yes,—you may now denounce him. But tell the council of the Vehmique they must wait for *my* signal, and on this occasion, at least, act under *my* orders.”

“That they will do without question or hesitation, so justly high is their opinion of your power and ability.”

At the next midnight meeting of the Vehmique, the heretic, Oscar de Ravenstein was denounced as the murderer of the heir of a noble and Catholic family, Ernest de Willenfeld; and the desire of Leonora, that they should wait her signal was acceded to.

“You spoke to my father of leaving us, Leonora; I trust that will never happen. He will learn all we so desire to know from the Abbess, and I am, sure in his present softened mood, he will throw no obstacle in the way of our future happiness.”

“But remember, Oscar,” she replied, “what I have once before told you—I never can or will become your wife, unless *in your heart* at least, you become a Catholic.”

“Oscar,” resumed Leonora, with assumed moderation, “I am no bigot, and I hope and believe that the sincere and virtuous of all religious professions will be saved: still, my own faith is too sacred to me ever to run the risk of its being weakened by a marriage with one of a different persuasion. Dear Oscar, if you could but think as I do!”

Oscar looked in her face as he drew her towards him; there was, as usual, no tear in the eye, no glow on the cheek, but there was the appearance of a calm deep tenderness of expression, that he thought harmonized far better than either blushes or tears with the peculiar character of Leonora; and as he thus intently read her countenance, she apparently could not repress a smile; one of those smiles which imparted such indescribable beauty to her face, and which he had not beheld for many a long day.

Alas! it did not require many such conversations as these to smooth the difficulties that lay in her way. She reasoned forcibly, she pleaded pathetically, she entreated tenderly; she promised the utmost secrecy as to his conversion, and at length *she succeeded*. On his knees, before Heaven and her, he read his recantation; she signed him with the cross, concealed a small rosary round his neck, and once again, and for the last time, his lips were pressed to hers.

"I have saved him!" she exclaimed, when alone, with unfeigned transport; "I have saved him! And now shall we not all three meet and love in perpetual blessedness?"

Leonora waited patiently until the Baron thought fit to renew the subject of his wishes and intentions concerning her.

Behind the castle, sloping backwards from it, arose the bold termination of the acclivity on which it was situated. This termination was divided into nearly equal parts by a deep ridge, one side of which presented an almost naked rock; the other, a sweep of green sward, with some old picturesque trees grouped here and there. Each division was easily accessible from either side; but the ridge between them was impassable. On the level and grassy part of this lonely elevation, commanding an extensive view over the sea and land, the Baron had, since the death of his wife, erected a rude seat, and almost every evening retired there for an hour or two, certain of not being intruded on.

Leonora, one evening, received a summons to attend him. He said to her, "It would be extremely disagreeable to me to have any communication, either personally or by letter, with the Abbess of St. Hilda, who, it appears, can alone give the information concerning you, which I presume you are as anxious to obtain as we can be. I think it more expedient that you yourself should have an interview with the Abbess; the result of that interview, whatever it may be, must necessarily enable me to see my way more clearly.

Leonora was secretly delighted with this proposal; it was of all things what she most desired, but she had not dared to originate it for fear of suspicion. She immediately acceded to it and withdrew, but not without having accurately observed the secluded spot which the Baron had selected for his hours of solitude, and she decided that it would suit well the last scene of the tragic drama, which her warped, yet powerful mind, had so boldly conceived, and hitherto so successfully executed.

On the following day the equipage of the Baron conveyed Leonora to the convent, where it was agreed she should remain until the day after. It was with a beating heart Oscar took leave of her.

"All my hopes," he whispered, "depend on this interview."

"And so do mine!" she emphatically replied.

Leonora was received almost as a canonized saint at the convent. Thanksgivings were returned for her success, and prayers were offered up for its continuance. The Bishop and some other clerical functionaries, together with the Judges of the Vehmique, were summoned. She was treated by them with the most profound respect; absolutions, benedictions, and exhortations, were freely bestowed; and nothing was left undone to confirm the delusion of her mind, so useful and gratifying to them, so dangerous to herself alone.

On the following day Leonora returned; Oscar was waiting to receive her; she met him with looks of joy: "Is all well?" he anxiously enquired.

"All *is* well;" she answered; "but I have something of a tale to tell. Therefore, Oscar, will you and the Baron allow me to meet you, this evening, at the top of the hill, where we shall be free from intrusion? By that time I shall be more composed, and shall be able to detail my little narrative with more precision and propriety!" Her request was granted without hesitation.

Oscar observed that during the remainder of the morning she kept herself secluded in her room; and when they met at the mid-day meal, she looked, if possible, more than usually pale, her eyes were more colourless and fixed, and every now and then they became restless, and wandered rapidly, but vacantly, from object to object. She seemed to avoid looking at Oscar or his father; his heart sank within him, and an undefinable sensation of uneasiness oppressed him.

The hour arrived, and he accompanied the Baron to the appointed spot where Leonora was to join them.

The evening was placid and beautiful; the sun was sinking behind the eminence on which St. Hilda towered, and the convent stood out in strong relief beneath its parting rays; they glanced upwards, too, to the lofty summit on which were seated the father and son, while on the spacious valley below the dark shades of evening were rapidly gathering. At length the great luminary slowly disappeared, and as it sank into its ocean-bed, a sudden and unaccountable chill fell on the heart of Oscar.

"Why does not Leonora come?"—he spoke these words with an effort, and as though the sound of his own voice startled him. His father appeared lost in thought, and he himself sank into a short train of melancholy reflection. He

imagined that he had not hitherto sufficiently considered and deplored the fearful, and even yet mysterious fate of the loved companion of his childhood; and he recalled to mind, that, in the pride and passion of his heart, he had never prayed that the blood of his bosom friend might depart from off him. "I must seek for *absolution*,"— and this idea brought other dark and appalling doubts; then came the image of Leonora, and, for the first time, he shrank from it, with a mingled feeling he could not define.

"What was that!" he exclaimed hurriedly, to his father; "Did you hear nothing?"

"Nothing but the wind among those fallen leaves."

"There is no wind, not enough to stir even a fallen leaf. I certainly heard a step, and then a rustling. I will see what it is."

He was just about moving to the clump of trees from whence the sound proceeded, when he became suddenly rooted to the spot, by observing the figure of Leonora rising from behind the rocky eminence on the opposite side of the impassable ridge. A long dark veil shrouded her form, but was thrown back from her forehead, displaying a countenance which the Baron had beheld *once* before. She descended with a slow, firm step, and stopped when she found herself directly opposite to, and on a level with them.

"Heaven have mercy!" cried the Baron, as he caught hold of the horror-struck Oscar for support; "there it is again! Spirit of Evil, avaunt!—Leonora!"

For a few moments she made no reply, but stood glaring upon them with her large and stony eyes, and her mouth distended to a fixed, unnatural grin.

"Leonora!" at length she slowly syllabled forth. "Baron de Ravenstein, thou betrayer of the love of woman, behold in Leonora the daughter of the heart-broken Agatha! Thou

destroyer of the aged, behold in Leonora the grandchild of the murdered de Rosenberg! Thou spoiler of the orphan, behold in Leonora the rightful mistress of this usurped domain! Above all, behold in Leonora the scourge of thy crimes, armed with the thunderbolt of vengeance! Like a blight, have I passed over thy house: thy fair child Eugenia, I helped to lay in her early, and, to the world, her dishonored grave; yet hast thou cause to thank me, for she was Ernest's wedded wife, and her soul was cleansed from the sin of heresy. The same blow struck to the heart of her mother. But thy son yet remains. Wherefore?—to throw the mantle of his virtues over thy crimes?—to erase the spot of infamy from thy name, and to brighten it hereafter into lustre?—to comfort thine old age, and to crown with honor thy grey hairs? No, no, no! But his soul is saved, stained, though it be, with the blood of his guiltless friend, for the *Cross* is upon it, and (thank me again, old man), it was my hand that traced it there. Peace to his spirit, and gently may it pass from this dark abode of pain and sorrow, to light, and life, and blessedness! Peace to his spirit!" And, as she pronounced this adjuration, she threw her arms in the air, and clasping them above her head, stood, with her body thrown back, her teeth clenched, her eyes fixed upwards on vacancy, while her black veil and long light hair fell sweeping to the ground. Her last words were the signal for his death; they had scarcely passed her lips ere the dreaded and never-failing arrow of the *Vehmique* had transfixed the heart of Oscar de Ravenstein. It was shot from the clump of trees, which he had been on the point of examining, and had a scroll upon it: "This to the heart of the murderer of Ernest de Willenfeld."

He made one bound forward, with his arms extended towards Leonora—the next moment he was a corpse at the feet of his father.

A long, loud, and yelling laugh, such as maniacs alone can give, echoed along the sides of the ravine, and reached even to the castle. She laughed as she beheld the Baron, petrified with horror, gazing on the body of his son; she laughed as she beheld him slowly sinking upon it, in the welcome insensibility produced by the extreme of agony. But the cool evening sky was pressing down upon her brow like an arch of heated iron, and the pale stars that had just begun to glimmer through the twilight, danced close to her eyes like scorching suns, and she rushed from the precipice, on the opposite side to the castle, with the swiftness, strength, and intrepidity of madness, and plunged into the woods beneath, in search of shade and moisture. There were those there, who were watching and waiting for her, yet not without difficulty was she secured, and conveyed to the convent.

For six months, existence was a blank to Leonora. At the end of that time, her reason began, slowly and by degrees, to re-assume its empire, but through life remained enveloped in those flickering lights and shadows by which it had hitherto been so awfully misled.

In less than a year, the bowed spirit of the once bold and haughty De Ravenstein, sank under its weight of suffering. He had been rarely seen, and his voice rarely heard, after that fatal evening: withdrawn into the solitude of his chamber, he refused to be comforted. The well-remembered menace of the avenging daughter, "I will *break his heart*—slowly and gradually shall it break, as *hers* has done," was fearfully fulfilled.

ON A LADY, SLANDERED.

BY BARRY CORNWALL.

I.

HER doom is writ;—her name is grown
 Familiar in the common mouth;
 And she who was, when all unknown,
 Like a sunbeam bursting from the South,
 Is overshadowed by her fate,—
 By others' envy,—others' hate!

I loved her when her fame was clear;
 I love her now her fame is dark:
 Twice—thrice—a thousand times more dear
 Is she, with Slander's serpent mark,
 Than Beauty, that did never know
 Shadow,—neither shame nor woe.

Let who will admire,—adore
 Her whom vulgar crowds do praise;
 I *will love my Love the more*
When she falls on evil days!
 Truer, firmer will I be,
 When the truth-like fail or flee.

II.

—Bird of mine ! though rivers wide
And wild seas between us run,
Yet I'll some day come, with pride,
And serve *thee* from sun to sun :
Meantime, all my wishes flee
To thy nest beyond the sea.

Mourn not ! Let a brighter doom
Breed no anguish in thy mind .
If the rose hath most perfume,
It hath still the thorn behind :
If the sun be at its height,
Think what follows,—certain night.

Murmur not ! Whatever ill
Cometh, am *I* not thy friend,
(In false times the firmer still,)—
Without changing, without end ?
Ah ! if *one* true friend be thine,
Dare not to repine !

LINES ON TORQUAY.

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, ESQ.

WHATEVER England's coasts display,
The fairest scenes are thine, Torquay!
Nor could Liguria's tepid shore
With palm and aloe please me more.
Sorrento softer tales may tell,
Parthenope sound louder shell,
Amalfi, Ocean's proudest boast,
Show loftier hills and livelier coast;
But, with thy dark oak woods behind,
Here stretched before the eastern wind
The sails that from their Zuyderzee
Brought him who left our fathers free.
Yet (shame upon me!) I sometimes
Have sigh'd awhile for sunnier climes,
Where, though no mariner, I too
Whistled aloft my little crew:
And now to spar, and now to fence,
And now to fathom Shakspeare's sense,
And now to trace the hand divine
That guided purest Raffael's line;
And, when the light at last was gone,
Weber led all to Oberon.

THE SISTERS OF THE SILVER PALACE.

A TALE FROM THE ITALIAN CHRONICLES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LION."

I AM going to tell you a tale of two beautiful maidens and their lovers, as true as any other *Fabliau*, and as long,—bright ladies and noble gentlemen!—as your patience will desire.

The chronicles do not declare in what year of our Lord it was that the Count Giambattista Magliano and his daughters inhabited the notable Silver Palace, which, as you know, doubtless, was the name of the most goodly *Casa* on the Brenta. Count Giambattista was a strange man; no one spoke well of him. The most liberal of the fathers of the monastery hard by, who took tithe of his domains, in roasted and boiled, yea, and in fish also—the Cardinal, who had dined with him the oftenest, made a wry mouth when his name was mentioned. A sorcerer he was thought by some,—by others a plotter; but every body agreed he was a miser, and pitied his two daughters, the Lady Alda and the Lady Angelica; for a hard life, said the gossips, must they have had—the one, to squeeze from the old churl the feathers she used to adorn herself with; the other, that rare net for the hair, of pearls which had hung up for a twelvemonth in the market at Damascus, and found never a purchaser, it was so costly. Every one, I say, pitied these maidens, and owned the same to be wonderful for their fair looks, and their varying blandishments; but, with all that, lovers came but scantily to the

Silver Palace, and rode away as they came, pretty speedily; whether out of starvation, or from disappointment in not having found in the fair ones all that was expected of sweetness and modesty, is not known to me.

At length it fell out, that, between age and the east wind, the Count Magliano deceased. He was tended carefully by his children; and the Lady Alda would have it that, to the last, his habits of spare living should be continued. Also, dutifully, the Lady Angelica refused him the clothes to his couch, which he would, if in his sound senses, have despised, but for which, being now somewhat light-headed, he did pray mightily. None but they two were with the father at the hour of his decease: and I have heard, that before the evening of that day, ere his death was known to the household, they had searched every nook and crevice of the Silver Palace, finding neither gold nor jewels, nor token of the same, but many scrolls, in which large sums of money owed by their father, were set down. In short, so far from being a miser, the Count Magliano had owned nothing to hoard, save the name of being a pinching man. The Saints forgive him!

"Sister!" said the Lady Alda, "this is a woful chance!"

"A woful chance, indeed," replied the Lady Angelica, "and hopeless, unless we make our wits help us. Let us hide that our father is deceased, at least till we be married."

"I fear, then," answered the Lady Alda, "that we must go to great cost in the embalming. Wilt thou give thy pearl net?"

"Not till I have caught in it some better prize than my ancient German Graf Alberic, with the grey beard. But, while we are talking, the news will be abroad." So the prudent maidens had the old man buried quietly, in the dusk of the evening, and they closed up his chamber, and gave out that he lay sick, watched there by one old serving-man. There

were none to question this save their poor maid and follower, for the large retinue of the Silver Palace had, one by one, dropped away; some out of discontent, to seek better service; some, like the Count, of eighty years, scanty food, spare clothing, and the east wind.

“Graf Alberic, with the grey beard!” said the Lady Alda to herself, when she walked alone—“Heaven keep us all from unequal matches!”—and devoutly she crossed herself—“my one faithful suitor, the Marquis Ojedo, is half a year older than this German bear! And that squint of his, how it puts mine eyes wrong whenever I look at him. O never, never! Better starve than marry him. What can the young cavaliers be doing?”

A year went by, “a long and dreary season of probation,” (as was observed by prudent neighbours, who, nevertheless, offered no help), for maidens nursing their sick parent, and for creditors awaiting his death to be paid by the heiresses. Rarely were the ladies Alda and Angelica seen at mass; and many a friar—repulsed when he would have confessed them or come to the speech of the sick man,—preached lustily against the hat and feathers, and the net of pearls, and the satin, and the furred robes, and the hanging sleeves, which set the eyes of the congregation a-wandering—mostly those of the young men. They were bidden to few revels, for the rumour of what their estate was like to prove, had all but reached even persons so ancient and deaf as the Count Alberic with the grey beard, and the squinting Marquis Ojedo. But though, as I said, the eyes of the young men followed their steps, and though they remained to be the envy of all the women for their proud looks and rich garments, the grapes were hanging purple on the trees in the second year of their orphanhood, and still,

whenever the maidens spoke together, they joined in the lamentable enquiry, "What can the young cavaliers be doing?"

I say, *whenever they spoke together*—because it is believed that each sister was cheered by hopeful thoughts of comfort when alone. The Lady Alda had been whispered to while at mass—shame that such traffickings should enter the house of God!—by a splendidly-attired young gallant, whose velvet doublet, and perfumed buskins, and barret cap clasped with a shining jewel, were the least of his attractions, so honey-sweet were his words, so bold, but not to unseemliness, were his eyes. And the Lady Alda had listened and looked, and let drop something of a gentle and complying answer, mingled artfully with fears of her churlish father, and of her jealous sister, until these moving discourses had reached the mention of a certain arch in the garden wall of the Silver Palace, and of a certain vesper-time at which the Marquis Ojedo was coming to claim her hand, and her cruel father had threatened to rise from his sick bed to sell the maiden to that squinting Spanish nobleman. Ah! Lady Alda confided not to the Prince Armonia-giocoso (such was the name of the swain) that father she had none, and that the Spaniard had been lured on by herself, with good words, till he believed himself indeed the choice of her love. Will you wonder then, that strenuously and secretly did she hide this blessing of a young, handsome wooer—for such she deemed it—from her sister?

Meanwhile, the Lady Angelica was scheming sweetly and secretly also. "O! had Alda once seen my beautiful Prince Rosabocca!" was ever her meditation when she walked alone, "I could never have a moment's peace!" Dainty had been the letter slipped into her long furred sleeves by this ardent cavalier,—so eminent for his melancholy visage, and his sorrowful coloured suit, and his shoes with peaked toes which pierced her heart. He too had knelt near her at mass (the sisters

never prayed together), and had plucked for her many a chaplet of roses for her adorning,—with every flower offering some of those soft solemn words, to which resistance there is none. And subtly had she, too, spread the lure, and threatened him with a suspicious and watchful sister, and a tyrannical father, and shocking Graf Alberic with his grey beard. There is a terrace in the gardens of the Silver Palace, (by this time grievously neglected), to the foot of which a gondola could conveniently be brought.—“By starlight on Friday evening,” were the last words which had passed between them on the occasion of its mention; after which, were Echo a babbler of the partings of lovers, she must have told of a kiss! “Thank my woman’s wit!” said the Lady Angelica, “it hath delivered me from Graf Alberic.—Poor sister Alda! I declare I wish her well!”

The time was sunset—such a sunset Italy only can show. You might have thought that the belfry of Our Lady’s church, whence the echo of evening chimes was still quivering, was carved out of amethyst, not common stone, and that the fair statues round about the western front were each one a great golden image. The air was full of the scents of jessamine and orange blossoms, and late roses; and there might already be heard tinklings under the windows of houses where beauties were known to abide—and sometimes a laugh, or a few notes touched on a lute, in answer. Here and there in the porch of some monastery might be seen the bald front of an ancient monk or so, as, transgressing, he leaned forth to breathe that perfumed air, or to take a wistful peep of the world without: while the guests in the *osterie* lingered to listen awhile longer to the ballad-monger, or to look at another of the wandering *ballerina*’s measures; for who would hurry home on such a

night? One way-side inn, I know of, was that evening crowded. To be sure it was always well filled with guests; for who was in such good renown for thrift and civil words as Monna Peretti, the hostess?—or where was there so pretty a damsel to be seen, and chaste and modest as pretty, as Diana, her ward?—or how could gallant be more blithely served to his horse or his supper, with a witty tale or a smart saying, while his foot was in the stirrup, or while he was draining the last drops from the flask, than by the black-eyed, well limbed, shrewd Simplizio, the widow's son?

On that pleasant night, however, Diana was something short of her share of the sunshine.—“What can all this closeting mean, mother,” she said, “in the tapestry parlour, between Simplizio, and those two ancient gentlemen? that he refuses to reply when I ask—and heeds not if I look angry—nay, and when I wept just now, laughed in my face, and bade me not be curious.”

“I know not, darling,” was Monna Peretti's answer, (more discreet than true) “but wipe thine eyes, and be not fearful. Simplizio is a good lad, and has been thy true bachelor these three years, next Pasch time. Let him not fancy thee curious or jealous.—They are calling for another flask of muscadel! I must be gone.”

“Jealous!” murmured Diana, looking after that nimble woman; “then she *doth* know of cause! I never named to her that I was jealous.—Simplizio—” here the youth came forth, with as pleasant a face as if he had that instant earned a purse of gold—“hast thou never a moment for me?”

“Not a second, *Piccina!*” cried the youth, gaily stopping further reproach, in a wise which would console any maiden, were she ever so petulant. “Go thy ways within—there is my mother run off her feet with those hungry merchants from Turin; and yonder above is the Friar Cherubino, from

Vallambrosa, who must needs keep his chamber alone.—Go and see that he lacks nothing, my pretty Diana, and bid him teach thee a cure for curiosity till to-morrow, or the morn after.—Nay, I will not away with that pouting, and I am already waited for”—and ere she could resist or again beseech him to stay, Simplizio was out of the court-yard. She ran to the gate, shading the sun from her eyes with her hand, to see which way he went; but there were many garden walls round about the inn, and a large elm or two, which being hung with vines were ample enough to hide two men, stouter than Simplizio, had it been needful. In short, he had altogether vanished.

“Poor little Diana!” laughed the youth as he strode away across the plain, half out of breath with his escape. “Well, a necklace of coral, or a satin petticoat for the *festa*, will soon bring matters round with her. She is a forgiving child, and so fond of me! And now for my proud beauty of the Silver Palace! What if she should have cared for me after all, and not for the Prince Armonia-giocoso?—Fie! the girl who could tell a lie about her father’s death, will not much regard the plain Simplizio Peretti! And she was won *so very* easily!” And with that he laughed merrily anew.

The Lady Rosalie

Count Edgar came to woo,
His speech was bold and free,
His mantle it was new.
And he thought himself so fair,
No maid his glance might dare;
Ah! wandering youths beware,
Lest you believe so too!

The lady from on high
Looked far across the mead,
And saw the Knight draw nigh,
Upon his prancing steed.

Her hair with flowers she tied,
And laughed to see his pride;
Ah! youths that wooing ride,
Of such a laugh take heed!

He knelt before her feet,
And swore her eye was bright,
And that her voice was sweet
As music heard by night!
"Ah, sweet! thy smilings show,
Rare gems shall bind thy brow,
If thou wilt hear my vow—
Thy Edgar woos aright!"

"Sister Angelica! sister Angelica!" cried a shrill voice from a window above the terrace on which the maiden was walking, singing like a nightingale, "why must thou be abroad at so late an hour?"

"Late, Alda? and the moon not up!—no fear have I of cramps or pains! the air refreshes me.—'Twill be my last evening here," she added to herself. "O! when were hours ever so long? Would that to-morrow were come!" And again she uplifted her voice—

The Knight departed mute,
The maiden stole unseen
To where a well-known lute
Rang through the thicket green.
And soon a gentle strain
Was heard from voices twain.
"Ah! Wealth! thou wooest in vain,
Where true Love once hath been!"

"What can ail Angelica?" said the Lady Alda, who had, by this time, also descended, "that she is so restless, and will not abide in her chamber this evening?—Well, it matters little now! the Prince Armonia-giocoso is constant—what he seems to be, I dare be sworn. No common man—no traitor in love could have that gallant air! Hark! were those his horse's feet already?" and she sped down a walk, cradled with vines, towards the arch which, as I have said, overhung the river.

"Whither so fast, sister Alda?" called a shrill voice close

behind her. It might have been the owl's, for she shook with fear, and turned not to reply to it.

"Whither so fast?" repeated her fleeter-footed sister, now close at her ear, "and decked out in all thy bravery; what means it?"

"O! sister, sister! fare thee well!" cried the Lady Alda, making a great show of tenderness, as nought better was to be done—"I am waited for—I am——"

"What, art thou going to leave me?" cried the Lady Angelica.—"Unkind, cruel, traitress! to have so concealed thy mind from me!—Thank my good stars!" said she to herself, still hanging on her sister's arm, and weeping, as if in sore despair; "that there is in store for me the sweet Prince Rosabocca. Prettily else had I been deserted!"

But Lady Alda pressed on, invited by the distinct plashing sound of a horse's feet in the water, and scarcely able to keep in the tender ejaculations which rose to her lips. She was soon at the arch. He was there—Santa Maria! how deliciously attired! and his horse, too, was caparisoned fit to carry a king. "Ah! take care, take care!" cried the maiden tenderly, afraid for his buskins; "I fear me the water is deep."

"Heed not, sweetest!" cried the youth, and then murmured to himself, "were the horse not a borrowed one, would I ride so easily?—Well, I shall not have the grooming of him to-morrow morning. And thou art ready? Exquisite punctuality!—ah! it is only the false who loiter! And who is that maiden beside thee, for methinks there be two of you?"

"No. one—nothing—my bower woman," was the Lady Alda's reply, making the while a great show of affection to the Lady Angelica, who wept more than it is thought she might have done had she heard the whole. "Now, I prythee, dearest child, come with me no further! We must part—I will write—I will send thee a lock of mine hair, sweetest, faithfulest friend!—Alas! my Prince, the wall is very high!" But for

all that, in one second more she was in his arms, he screening his face, the while he looked up to her, as well as he could, which was not hard to do, inasmuch as the twilight shadows were falling, and that quickly. Indeed, had he worn a visor, he could not have passed away keeping his features more entirely strange to the Lady Angelica, who, as she stole home, was never tired of repeating to herself—"Who could have thought it?—Ride behind him on his horse, like a common vintager's wife! Some mean fellow, dressed out in tawdry clothes, I warrant him. But it serves her justly. Fie upon all such deceit!"

Meanwhile the two, having presently quitted the river's margin, were making haste across the plain (the horse bearing his part as a spirited minister) as if, indeed, behind them had been, what the Lady Alda professed to dread, a prying sister and a cruel father! For a mile neither spoke much: it may be, because deep love in its first instants of rapture is always silent—it may be, because the Prince Armonia-giocoso was wondering what fantasy could make a maiden desirous to be stolen away, when there was none from whom to steal her! Ye have guessed his true name, I see, already.

"Faster! faster!" cried the Lady Alda, at last, when the speed of Saladin (careless though his burden was fair), began to abate a little. "Care you not, dearest Prince, lest we should be overtaken?"

The Prince made no answer; and the Lady Alda urged him again, a little louder, for, with all her sweet looks, there were times when her voice would make itself heard, and now she was fearful of not being run away with fast enough.

"There is as much fear of thy being pursued, my bright Lady Alda," replied the cavalier, "as there is truth in——"

"Thou wouldst not already say, truth in thy love?" was the tender interruption; for though sure of his reply, like other maidens I have heard of, the Lady Alda was anxious to hear the same. "Thou wouldst not already declare that thou art



Edw. Colburn

W. Stames



wearied of thy charge? Ah! man! man!"—and with that she fetched a few very tender sighs.

But the answer came not—whereupon she pressed for it again in that sharper tone of her's: "What new falsehood wouldst say, my Prince?"

"Simply," spoke out the youth, his eye glancing keenly athwart the plain, as though he sought something—"simply, that there is as much fear of thy being pursued, as there is truth in my princeship. Diamond hath cut diamond. Thy father, the Count Magliano, deceased a twelvemonth since. Thy sister, who did ill not to peep over the wall just now, is about herself to try her fortune with my patron's friend, the Prince Rosabocca, whose groom oftentimes have I been—plain Simplizio Peretti being my name—the son of the hostess of our Lady of the Cherries."

I have heard of many storms—of earthquakes also: but never were either so dreadful as the Lady Alda's wrath upon this goodly revelation being made to her. Violent were her words—terrible to hear her menaces. "Set me down, wretch! set me down, I say! O! if there be law in Italy, or one man left, thou shalt rue this audacity. The Marquis Ojedo shall hear of it!"

"I hope so," said Simplizio, wiping his forehead with his cuff, as he took the disenchanted damsel at her word, and assisted her to alight, "and yonder he sits in his coach, to redress your wrongs, fairest lady! Had ye trifled less with his suit, there had been no need of my ministry. I judge that now you will hardly desire to return unwed to the Silver Palace." And, as he spoke, the chariot door was opened, and, with a parting kiss upon her hand, nimbly given, to escape the cuff her fingers tingled to bestow, the faithless Prince Armonia-giocoso, delivered the Lady Alda into the staid keeping of the squinting Spanish Marquis.

"Fifty golden crowns won, and this rare suit!" laughed Simplizio, as he rode across the plain, "and as much to-morrow

night from Graf Alberic!—O, Diana! Diana! thou mayest well afford a little heartache, who art so soon to be so sumptuously dowered, and so merrily wedded!”

It was the second morning after the Lady Alda's wedding, that the Marquis Ojedo, a little wondering what had become of some of her charms, stole forth, and left his young wife at home, planning new robes and furniture, and marvellously set upon a plume which she would have the old gentleman buy, because it had been refused, as too costly, by no less a personage than the Queen of Cyprus. The Lady Alda, truth to say, for all she was so lately wedded, lacked company—her sister to wrangle with, or news—to discover whether, indeed, there was any truth in what that audacious fellow had declared concerning the Lady Angelica, and some Prince Rosabocca, or other. All at once she hears a voice in the antechamber. “Why, it is Angelica!” exclaimed she, “come to mock me, with her younger bridegroom!” and willingly would she have shrunk behind the arras. But she was Count Giambattista's daughter: and accordingly she stiffened herself up, and prepared to express much contentment in the nuptial state. Opened the door, and one stood there half pale, half red, but wondrously richly dressed—It was Angelica!

“Where is the Marquis?—I would see the Marquis! Poor gentleman, how he will take it to heart, when he finds his old comrade married, and he still a ba——Ah! sister Alda! sister Alda! what do you here?”

“What my lord's loving wife ought to do,” was the other's reply, swallowing her envy as best she might. “And how doth the Prince Rosabocca?”

“Knowest thou aught of that——? Listen, it was thy unkindness in hiding from me thy resolve to marry the Spanish lord, that drove me to think of the wretch!—I declare it was!



W. M. 11

1780

Allegory

Allegory of the French Revolution, 1793. The woman represents Liberty, and the man represents Reason.

—I loved him not;—and even, when he came last evening to fetch me away with his gondola, as was appointed—(he hath a marvellously courtly look, in that dark suit—the impostor)!—O! I say, when I came down the west terrace for the last time, —he leading me, and soothing me ever so sweetly the while, and swearing the stars were dim, not because they disdained to light us, but because my two eyes shamed them—I tell thee, I felt a doleful foreboding; and I would fain have tarried, but he hurried me along.—It was my Graf Alberic's impatience——"

Warmly did the Lady Alda, embracing her, interrupt the Lady Angelica's recital. "Kiss me, sweetest sister! and let us be friends again! I know all.—We have been both tricked. But may we deserve to be doubted *for* no daughters of the Count Giambattista Magliano—rest his soul! if we do not visit it upon our husbands. Heaven be thanked! man is mortal, and an old man especially so!"

Now, I shall be asked,—bright ladies and noble gentlemen,—whether these sisters of the Silver Palace kept their vow. But I know no more of their history, save that the Lady Alda was in turn cut short, by a great noise below of *zampogni* and dulcimers, and merry boys and girls shouting, and the ambling of mules' feet.

"What meaneth that uproar, Marquis?" inquired she of her spouse, who entered ere she could inquire—"Is my castle garden turned into an *osteria* already?"

And he answered quietly, "It is the wedding train of Diana, Monna Peretti's ward, and Simplizio her son. Were it not for my stiff neck I would open the window, that ye might hear. So merry a ballad some of them are singing! and the burden is—

Ah, Wealth! thou wooest in vain,
Where true Love once hath been."

FRAGMENT OF AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

BY THE VISCOUNT MAIDSTONE.

"THE social world was springing to new life
 With many an untold wish and longing rife;
 High aspirations yearn'd, and valour spoke
 In humble souls, late crouching to the yoke;
 Dropp'd from the peasant's neck the feudal chain,
 And left him foaming with dissembled pain.
 A man alone there lack'd to strike the blow,
 And he arose in fiery Mirabeau.
 'Twas his to dissipate at once the awe
 Which made a king's caprice the nation's law.
 Then, like a fairy vision, disappears
 The social fabrick of a thousand years,
 And empty fools, conventionally great,
 Find that the breath they scorn can mar their state;
 For full-blown pride, secure in pomp of place,
 Scorns in preluding signs its fall to trace;
 Nor dream the rich that strong opinion lies
 Beneath the peasant's gown of homespun frieze.
 Yet so it is—that state no warning saves,
 Where fools are tyrants, and the wise are slaves.
 And so 'twas seen—when first resistless grown,
 The cap of Liberty o'ertopped the Crown,
 And Reason reign'd, and Sieyes' impious hand,
 Scared Revelation from the Godless land;

Made life a torment, flung an hopeless gloom
Around the dark suspicions of the tomb,
And bade each miscreant eat and drink his fill,
Like Eve's great tempter, liberal of ill.

Then rose Napoleon!—as a comet's light
Breaks on some Indian sage's wond'ring sight,
Forth from the realms of boundless space he came—
Troubled his aspect, and his track all flame,
A man like none before him—born to be
His age's wonder, scourge, and mystery.
He knew mankind, and scorn'd their feebler clay,
Sternly bade rivals tremble and obey;
They met his glance, confess'd the contest vain,
And sued for places in the Consul's train!—
A dawn of glory follow'd—scream'd and rose
The Gallic eagle o'er his cowering foes,
And cast inquiringly his downward eye
To choose the boldest for his enemy.
While ancient fools slept o'er the art of war,
And hail'd Napoleon to their puny bar,
Unfetter'd he by prejudice or rule,
Shook the foundations of their tott'ring school,
And rubb'd from worthy souls pedantic rust
By laying empires in their own great dust.
Italian plains again received the Gaul,
Again he camp'd 'neath Rome's eternal wall;
But not as once did Godlike forms dismay,
And well nigh scare th' invader from his prey;
And no Camillus lived, like him of old,
To bid Expediency put up his gold.
Egypt's brute gods, their dusk complexions hid,
And centuries gazed from Cheop's pyramid;

Great Cæsar's fortune, Pompey's mighty shade,
Hail'd to their stage the victor renegade,
And suns like theirs illum'd with glorious ray
The opening splendor of Napoleon's day.

But see ! the veteran's not unmanly woe
Moistens with tears th' adieus of Fontainbleau ;
For nations vast and many were combined,
To stay the soarings of one master mind,
And winter's ruthless snows, and Scythian hands,
Had dealt destruction to his conq'ring bands.
Fond fools ! by love of him and glory led,
To share the honors of the nameless dead.
He came with nought but hope and his good blade,
He goes with scarce so much—yet ne'er shall fade
The wreath he wrought himself, nor droop the bays
That deck his forehead to the end of days :
The leaves are water'd by a nation's tears,
The bloom is freshen'd by the rolling years,
Perennial honors cluster o'er thine head—
Calm be thy rest and rising—mighty dead !

If ye be sailing on old Ocean's breast,
And, vex'd with many wand'rings, long for rest,
Haply ye'll reef your weary sails awhile,
Where dash the waves on St. Helena's isle,
A little point of rock ; yet, though it be
Least of the islands tenanting the sea,
There had he once again his flag unfurl'd,
Like Archimedes, he had moved the world
And here in unpresuming slumber laid,
He rests beneath the weeping willow's shade,
Where, ling'ring, ye may muse, and weep, and say,
' Do I then bend me o'er Napoleon's clay,

Clay sometime sympathetic with a mind
Which sway'd the masses and disposed mankind?'
Go to this spot, thou Liberal,—and then,
Preach, if thou durst, equality in men.

Vain is the boast, and pompous the display,
Would bear from hence his coffin'd dust away,
And break the sacred quiet of his grave,
As if his glory could not pass the wave,
To hang the hero's sword above his urn,
And hail in studied phrase his late return.

No, mightiest Essence! in whatever sphere,
Smoulders the flame which burnt so brightly here,
If that it smoulder, now no more confin'd,
Nor burn more glorious with its rays refin'd,
Bright as the stars we know not of and clear
As spotless dawns of the early year.
Thine is no marble pomp, no sculptured bays,
These may remind where memory decays;
Thine is the hero's monument—the page,
Which fires to glorious deeds an unborn age.
But if some other monument must be,
There is but one equivalent to thee;
Let prostrate nations join in hateful toil,
And treasure raise, and blood cement the pile,
A mass like those where Nile's rich waters spread
Around the follies of the Memphian dead;
Then write in characters which all may see,
That flesh is grass, and life is vanity."

FLATTERY.

BY MRS. TORRE HOLME.

HE tells me, that the flowers I wear
Are sweet, in their young freshness smiling;
But that my charms beyond compare
Are far more lovely and beguiling.

He tells me, that the violet's blue
Is dim beside my eyes dark shading,
And that the rich carnation's hue
By my red lip looks pale and fading.

He says, my raven hair unbound
To the wild breeze its tresses flinging,
Scatters a richer perfume round
Than clover fields in summer springing.

He tells me—but I'll not repeat
All the soft words that gently stealing
My ear delighted, joys to meet,
The passion of his soul revealing.

No semblance of deceit or ill
In his sweet falsehoods I discover,
But only prize more dearly still
So fond, so warm, so *blind* a lover.

CURIOSITY.

BY RICHARD WESTMACOTT, ESQ.

A VISITOR at an old family mansion in ——shire, after retiring on the first night of his arrival, amused himself till a late hour in reading from one of the works which he found in the well-stored book-case in his bed-room. The log on his hearth was burnt out, and the hour of two had just sounded from the clock in the stable-tower, as he extinguished his light, and got into bed. He had been there but a few minutes, and was just falling off into slumber, when he was startled by a strange noise. It was as if something had been wrenched or torn away from a wall or pavement; and it was followed by a sound as if some heavy body had fallen on the ground. He started up and listened, got out of bed, and found his way to the window, when he again listened attentively, but could hear nothing; and when he opened it and looked out, the night was so dark that it was utterly impossible to distinguish any object. As there was no repetition of the noise, he did not feel there was any necessity to alarm the house. He therefore returned to his bed, and having after some time recovered his composure, he fell asleep.

He awoke early, and his first thoughts were of the strange noise he had heard before he began his rest. He could not resist the temptation to go again to the window, and see whether he could discover any reason for what he had heard, and which seemed to him at the time to proceed from that direction.

It was very early, and the cold grey light of morning was as

yet unwarmed by the rich tones of the rising sun. All was quiet and hushed, and nature seemed still wrapped in sleep. There was a slight breeze, which just moved the tops of the stately trees which stood in groups around the house, and ornamented the extensive park and finely varied landscape beyond it, and upon which his delighted eye gazed now for the first time, as his arrival the previous night had been at so late an hour that he had not been able to see the character of the grounds through which he had passed. On the wide-spread lawn near the house were two or three leverets leaping in playful yet noiseless gambols over the velvet grass; and occasionally was heard—and it was the only interruption to that sweet stillness—the gentle tinkling of a distant sheep-bell. It was a morning to invite meditation by its calmness—to excite hope by its promise of a golden day—to make the heart elate with love and thankfulness.

Upon looking down to the ground beneath the window, there were signs of past violence, and our observer felt convinced in a moment that he had divined the cause of the noise by which he had been disturbed. A portion of a sturdy creeper, which clothed the wall near his windows, was torn away, and was lying on the border of flowers beneath. The mould, too, was thrown about in disorder. It was evident that an attempt had been made to climb the wall, and that the support had failed, and whoever the intruder was, that he had been precipitated into the—happily—soft bed of turf and flowers beneath. Upon examining with greater attention, he saw a glove, and his interest and curiosity were further increased by his observing among the flowers a folded and crumpled paper. It was impossible, at the height from which he was regarding these objects, to make himself master of them; but he resolved, as soon as he could emerge from his room, to proceed to that part of the grounds which his window overlooked, and, securing his proofs,

endeavour to unravel a mystery which was now tinged with a character of romance. It was too early then to dress. Ignorant of the plan of the house, he could not venture to steal forth and satisfy his curiosity, at the risk of disturbing its inmates; so closing his window, he threw off his dressing-gown, and returned into bed, when in a few minutes he fell into a deep sleep, from which he was only aroused by his servant coming to call him.

The first thing he did upon rising was to throw open his window, and anxiously to look down for his premeditated spoil. Alas! the glove was gone; the paper or letter had disappeared; the flower-bed looked as if it never had been disturbed; and the ruined creeper had been dressed or removed. In short, every thing appeared in the most perfect order and beauty; and there was nothing left for him but to abuse Dame Fortune for allowing him to oversleep himself, and thus lose what he had set his heart upon as a reward for early rising. Upon descending from his room, he found his way into the lower suite of apartments, and as one of the ground windows was open, he went out into the garden or terrace, and his curiosity prompted him to seek the side of the house on which he slept. Before reaching the desired spot, he found an old gardener occupied in dressing one of the creepers. He inquired carelessly of him, "whether the creepers got much out of order?"

"Yes, sir," replied the old man, "they do sometimes: and we have two or three old owls that go to them for vermin I suppose, and they breaks them down sadly. But Sir Arthur pets them like, and won't have them driven away. I found one of the creepers in the ladies' garden lying right across the walk this morning——"

"And the flower-bed disturbed too?"

"No, no, I didn't; all that was in order enough. The ladies takes too good care of them."

"But did you not find a—a glove lying there this morning?" inquired our friend.

"A what, sir?" said the man, who was somewhat deaf—"but I beg pardon, I see my lady in the conservatory, and I must go to her;" and he disappeared through an adjoining glass door.

It was provoking that every thing seemed to conspire to disappoint him in discovering a clue to the night mystery; however, he was determined to mention the subject at breakfast, and then, possibly, the enigma might be solved. After strolling about for a short time, a bell was rung, which he rightly judged was to announce the breakfast hour. He returned into the house by the hall, and as he was about to place his hat with others he saw on a large table, a note addressed to him met his eye. Surprised, he opened it, and read the following:—
"*You are appealed to as a gentleman to be silent on what occurred last night.*" The ink was freshly dried, the envelope was unsealed, and the handwriting quite unknown to him; but it was of that quality which made him feel quite satisfied his correspondent was of the gentler sex. He had just read the lines, and was putting them into his pocket, wondering more and more at the growing interest that was attaching itself to the mystery of the noise, when a servant seeing him, came forward, and pointed to the breakfast-room, into which he was ushered.

In addition to his host and two gentlemen, of not youthful years, whom he had met the evening before, and with whom he had taken some refreshment after his late arrival, he found two ladies. To one of these, the maiden sister of his host, Sir Arthur Neville, he was presented in due form. To the other an introduction was not necessary, as he had met her before when visiting in the neighbourhood. She was one of Sir Arthur's daughters; about eighteen years of age, and strikingly beautiful. She acknowledged, very gracefully, the acquaint-

ance, and, as our friend took his seat near her, he expressed the pleasure he had in again meeting her. A fine physiognomist might have divined that the pleasure was not exclusively on one side: however, the expression in her beautiful face was so sudden and passing, that "almost ere it came it was gone." Two or three other seats were unoccupied. Before breakfast was over these were filled by an elder daughter of mine host, a girl, or rather young woman, five or six years older than the sister; by a lady, wife to one of the gentlemen already mentioned; and a younger gentleman. Sir Arthur's eldest daughter—he had but two children—was not, at first sight, so strikingly beautiful as Blanche, but there was a calm and benevolent, perhaps a slightly melancholy expression in her countenance that soon engaged and fixed the attention. She spoke to our visitor when he was introduced to her, regretting her cousin, whom he was to have met, had not arrived; but, she added, they expected he would appear in the course of the day. Conversation soon became general, and there seemed to be present all the elements of social happiness: good-humour, and intelligence, and beauty; the authority, and "*a plomb*" of age, and the brightness and charm of youth. The old baronet asked Frances, his eldest daughter, how her new plants, which had been brought her by some friendly traveller, were going on. She said she had been tying and watering them under old Michael's directions, and hoped they would do credit to her care and gardening.

"Blanche is an idle baggage," said the old gentleman; "she has no fancies, and won't take care of flowers."

"No; I like Frances's flowers, and to see her taking care of them; but I am not idle, and I tell you what I will do to prove it, papa: I'll ride with you to ———, and meet Walter, who has ordered his horse to be there."

This was the "basis of a treaty," as diplomatists would say.

A riding party, of which our friend took care to be one, was fixed for two o'clock. The ladies were to drive out, and thus amusement and occupation were provided, and all were satisfied with the parts they were to perform.

Our innocent depository of a secret,—of which he only yet knew there *was* a secret and a mystery,—was only *half* comfortable. He had some hope, (though, again, that hope did not contribute to his ease), that during his ride he might elicit something from the young lady, who, he imagined, had a knowledge of the occurrences of the night; but there was a buoyancy of spirit in her manner and conversation that looked very unlike having a secret weighing on her mind; while at the same time her openness was tempered by such a perfectly natural modesty, that he felt sure she was guiltless either of acting a part, or of double dealing. He was for a moment lost in thinking of his strange position. All but utterly unknown to any one in the house, (for his friend Walter, who had invited him, and who was to introduce him, was absent), he found he was already a *confidant*; but of whom, or of what, he could not form the slightest idea. He was aroused from his reverie by the baronet's asking him "how he slept after his journey?"—to which Blanche added, with a peculiarly sly look, she hoped "he had had no visitors to disturb him."

"Do not confess it if you had," she continued, somewhat mysteriously, and before our friend could reply. "Only take my advice—keep your windows closed at night, and don't feel alarmed at strange noises."

This open avowal of her acquaintance with what had been only *alluded* to in the note which begged his secrecy, struck the person she addressed with astonishment; but he only smiled, and bowed, and said nothing. The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders and smiled too, saying he supposed he must hold his peace on that subject; while Blanche, looking at her now

perfectly mystified companion, merely added, "I trust you do not sleep with loaded pistols; you might be tempted—might he not, papa! to——"

"Ay—and I know nobody who would be more sorry than Miss Blanche," said he, nodding sily at her.

Our friend gave Blanche a look of profound intelligence. He felt he was right in his first surmise. He was in Blanche's confidence, and he resolved to wait in honorable silence, till she was disposed to command his services in some romantic adventure, in which he was sure—too sure for him to feel altogether pleased—she must be the heroine. However, he experienced something like consolation in the fact that the secret of so beautiful and interesting a being was safe in his bosom; and he "mentally ejaculated," (which, by-the-bye, must be a very curious as well as difficult thing to do), "I will die rather than betray her."

At —— they met Sir Arthur's nephew, who excused himself to his friend for his unavoidable absence the previous night, and with the addition of his company the party returned home.

The following night there was no repetition of the disturbance that had interrupted our friend's repose, nor had any thing occurred, either directly or indirectly, to clear up the mystery in which he felt interested. He could not help doubting, after all, whether Blanche was mixed up with the whole adventure, though she evidently, he admitted, knew something of it; and he began to consider upon whom he could fix a suspicion of being engaged in it. Blanche had been in excellent spirits, the life and joy of the house. *That* was rather against *her* being in love, and a party to any love-sick cavalier's night-watching; (for, he argued, all persons in love are thoughtful, and, to the common eye, somewhat dull.) Frances held her mild and even course; "my aunt"—but he could not, for a moment, associate "my aunt," a virgin of sixty, with his romantic

speculations; and as for the other lady-inmate, she was married, and not of a quality of age or beauty for any Romeo by land, or Leander by water, to risk his neck or life to gain her favors. Ladies' maids are addicted to tenderness, particularly, it is said, "midst groves and glades," but they usually are more considerate than to place the lives of those they affect in such jeopardy as that incurred by last night's hero. Besides, the point desired, must have been the very identical room in which he slept! Strange!—and still he felt bound not to make any enquiry, nor hazard any observation by which the difficulty might be cleared up.

The next two or three days passed as is usual in country houses. Nothing had occurred to throw any light upon *the* secret, and our "*confidant*" was giving up all hope of its being alluded to by any one, till one evening Blanche, as she was placing her music on the stand previously to singing, laughingly asked him as he stood near to her—"if he had had any more night visitors?"

She was assured most seriously that he had not. "Do you sing?" resumed Blanche.

He was not a little startled and mortified at this sudden change of subject, just as he hoped an opening was made towards an *eclaircissement*. He stammered out that he did not possess that accomplishment.

"Do not regret it," said Blanche. "Papa hates singing men, that is, singing gentlemen—amateurs; he says, when once they begin, they never know when to leave off. Perhaps you return the compliment, and hate singing women?"

This badinage was put an end to by Sir Arthur calling out to Blanche to sing his favorite song, her performance of which so delighted our friend, as to banish from his mind for the time being, the thought of all save the lovely songstress.

The following day there was to be a grand *fête champêtre*

at a neighbour's about six miles off, to which Sir Arthur's family and party were invited, and to which all were to go. Before, however, we conduct our friends to Whitcombe, it may be as well to bring our readers a little acquainted with its possessor, Sir Ralph Whitcombe, baronet. In the first place, his age was about sixty. In the next, he was a widower; but he had been twice married. There were circumstances connected with his first marriage that were supposed to have exercised a great influence upon his character in after life; but most of the few who knew the story had died off, and it was rather hinted at than talked of by the older gossips, who sometimes taxed their memory in order to show off to their open-mouthed neighbours how much or how little they could tell. In his younger days he had seduced the beautiful daughter of a farmer, and her brother, who had been absent at sea, when he returned and found that his sister was the squire's paramour, made him marry her; and it was pretty well understood that the means he had resorted to, to effect this, were of a weighty and very forcible description. At that time, Sir Ralph's father was living. He was what is called a character. He affected "bonhommie" and candour—and assumed the right to say just what he pleased, however insolent, with no idea any one had an equal right to be offended at it. He laughed, and rolled about his portly person as he told his stories, or gave his opinion; and was in excellent humour as long as nobody differed from him or interrupted him. He thought all below his own grade little better than the brute creation, made to till the land, and to pay rent, and to stand and make bows as he came out of church, or passed through a gate. In his own family he was a tyrant, and selfish beyond the usual measure of that quality in some of those who only seem to be born to "go on" with a name. Upon being made acquainted with what had occurred, his anger knew no bounds. Its first burst was upon the head of his son. His

income was reduced to the narrowest limits, and his father commanded him, under a threat of disinheriting him in case of disobedience, to go abroad, and to sign a paper that he would never, directly or indirectly, hold any communication with his wife—a condition to which he subscribed without hesitation. He had lived with Ellen Gray two years, and had no child. The heartless brute had long been tired of his victim, and the forced marriage had completed a disgust which possession and satiety had made way for. Her brother, her only protector, left England on service, and from which, it was strange, he never returned, nor was any thing known of him; and the unhappy girl, now a wife, was removed to a distant residence, where, on a slender allowance, she consented to pass the remainder of her days under a feigned name.

It was some time after these events that Sir Arthur Neville settled in the neighbourhood, having, by marriage, become possessed of one of the finest seats in the county. He soon made the acquaintance of the gentry around him, and amongst others, of Sir Ralph Whitcombe; but he saw and knew little of him. He was then an old man, and a great invalid, and seldom appeared. He had lost his wife many years, and his only remaining child—his son being absent—was married, and had removed to a distant county. Two years after Sir Arthur had been fixed in ——shire, Sir Ralph died, and this event brought home the heir.

Ralph, now Sir Ralph Whitcombe, had been absent altogether about five years. During his absence he had heard that Ellen was dead: and he had endeavoured to have it reported that the marriage was a feigned one, and that she never was his wife. No allusion was made to her in old Sir Ralph's will, and the son seemed to have buried her in oblivion. One of his earliest acts, after his return to the house of his forefathers, was to ally himself in marriage with a lady of high family and

connections in a distant county, and he soon became an active and leading man in ——shire. At the time of this little history, Sir Ralph was again a widower. His second, and acknowledged wife, having died without giving him any children.

Sir Arthur Neville and Sir Ralph Whitcombe were acquaintances but not friends. They had been rival candidates to represent ——shire, and both being warm-tempered, many circumstances had occurred during the contest that had left them with no friendly feelings towards each other. Sir Arthur had so far forgiven the provocation he had received, that after a time, he agreed to meet Sir Ralph Whitcombe at the table of a mutual friend; and now occasionally he visited Whitcombe. These visits were, of course, returned; but Sir Ralph was incapable of forgiving, and in spite of outward good-breeding, a close observer would see that his heart was not in his hand when it was offered, in seeming courtesy and kindness, to his worthy neighbour.

Sir Arthur knew something of Whitcombe's early history; and, though he never divulged it to his neighbour's disgrace and prejudice, his own family were not ignorant of his feelings towards him. He had more than once given his daughter to understand that his intercourse with Sir Ralph was rather a matter of ceremony, that it might not be said he wished to perpetuate a feud; but he desired nothing further. They therefore met on great occasions—asked each other once or twice a year to a dinner or a fête, and met and parted each time with neither increase nor decrease of interest. The influence of character and high feeling had, however, been acknowledged by Sir Ralph on more than one occasion, and on two or three questions in which the county had been much excited, he had supported the views of the honest, upright, and worthy Sir Arthur Neville.

So much by way of a note of introduction to Whitcombe and its owner. We now resume the thread of our narrative.

Frances Neville was sitting in her dressing room. Her elbow rested on the table, and leaning her pale cheek on her hand, she apparently was gazing on the beautiful view from her window, while in reality she was absorbed in deep thought. At length she awoke, as it were, from her reverie, and looked round the room, to assure herself she was alone.

"I know not what to do," said she, in a low voice—"I know not what to do! To be present at this fête will be misery to me—and yet—how can I avoid it?" She unlocked a jewel case that was on the table, and drew from a secret drawer a letter—it was soiled, and appeared as if it had been crumpled up. She opened it and read its contents, and tears fell on the paper.

"No! I will not desert you," she said, contemplating the writing; "and yet, how nearly has your own imprudence ruined you, and compromised me. Thank Heaven! I believe that has been prevented. Yes," sighing deeply, "I will go to Whitcombe, and bear all that may happen."

It was time for Frances to dress, and Alice, her maid, entered the room to assist her lady in that important operation. Frances was so entirely pre-occupied that she did not hear Alice's footstep, and the *femme-de-chambre* trod still more lightly when she saw her mistress so deeply occupied, and felt sure that her presence was unobserved. Pretty Alice was a very good girl, and "never meant any harm," but—Alice was born to be a lady's maid. Curiosity was a grand ingredient in her composition, and any thing like a secret offered to her imagination delight and interest beyond any thing else this world, or her world, had to bestow. To find her young lady so totally and entirely absorbed in reading a letter, was, of course, sufficient to excite and arouse this feeling to the utmost, and she was



impelled by it—the force of nature—to endeavour to discover what there could be in a letter that was able to make a young lady, going to a fête, forget to dress! With a light step, therefore, she approached the chair in which her mistress was seated, and, peeping round the corner of its old-fashioned back, read over her lady's shoulder what she could make out of the contents of the letter. This was not much, but the Abigail discovered it was from some one who felt tenderly towards his correspondent, and this was sufficient to give her a secret, which she imagined would be valuable to her as a means, when occasion should arise, of making her of importance. With this information, and her head in a moment filled with sighs, moonlight meetings, secret notes, favors, bell-ringing, and all the accompaniments to a “passage of love,” she retired as stealthily as she entered, and then, making a slight noise near the door, appeared as if only then coming from the gallery.

Frances closed the letter, placed it on the table before her, and covered it with a *presse papier*. This was done so calmly, and even carelessly, that Alice's waiting-woman's mind almost doubted, in spite of its conviction, what her eyes had but just assured her of—namely, that the paper before her was really and truly a love-letter. She felt that had *she* possessed such a document, and been interrupted while perusing it, or had even heard the sound of any living thing within half a mile of her, she should have blushed and bustled, and hid the letter, and been full of embarrassment; but there sat Frances—calm, undisturbed, and without the slightest additional colour on her soft and delicate cheek, just as if—to use a favorite expression of Alice—“just as if nothing had happened!”

Frances went through the business of the toilet “wrapped in dismal thinkings,” and being dressed, desired Alice to go and see whether the carriages had driven round to the court; an order she obeyed, but not without first looking wistfully at the

imprisoned letter, and lamenting within herself that so little of it was as yet known to her. She determined, however, to watch where her mistress deposited it, and, if care or keys could get at it, to know all its contents, before she slept that night. On her quitting the room, Frances took up the letter, opened it, and pressed it to her lips; then calmly folded it up again, and just at the moment Alice entered the room, dropped it on the small fire that was smouldering away within arm's-length of her toilette table. "Ma'am—Miss Frances!—the letter will be burnt," screamed Alice.

"Well, Alice; that is a very natural consequence of throwing a letter into the fire. Is the carriage ready?"

Upon hearing it was, she rose from her seat, and desiring Alice to bring her shawl, left the room. Alice bit her lip, and in the worst possible humour followed her lady. The party was assembled in the library, and soon after drove off in two carriages. Alice watched them down the avenue, and then returned to her apartment, muttering "I'd have given my best silk dress to know who it was."

The preparations for the *fête* were on a magnificent scale. The company was received on the ample lawn, on which were thrown here and there rich carpets, with ottomans, carved chairs, and luxurious cushions for the visitors to repose upon. On one side was the house, through which the company, on arriving, passed to the lawn, and in front of it an open landscape, extending over many acres of Sir Ralph's fine estate, with broad patches of wood and water, and bounded by a far distant line of picturesque hills. All was lighted by a resplendent sun, whose brightness and heat were tempered by the masses of white fleecy cloud that now and then floated past him, checking the intenseness of his rays, and varying the light and shadow of the living picture beneath.

The ladies present were generally acquainted with each

other, but several of the gentlemen were strangers to the party. These chiefly were officers of a regiment quartered at ———, and to whom invitations had been forwarded by Sir Ralph, as well to gain a few dancers, as to give greater brilliancy to his entertainment by a sprinkling of gay uniforms in which some of the gentlemen appeared. After a splendid breakfast, which was served in the upper suite of apartments, the company began to disperse itself in various parties in search of pleasure or amusement. Some descended into the lower rooms, which were prepared for dancing, and commenced a ball. Others seated themselves on the lawn, to wile away the time in conversation; while others strolled about the extensive and beautiful grounds. Frances was one of these, and she soon found herself alone in a well-stocked conservatory, to which her love of flowers had attracted her. She did not seem surprised to hear her name pronounced; but she turned round quickly, and placed her finger on her lip, as a young and handsome man came forward, and was about to enter the conservatory. He took both her hands in his, and pressed them. Frances at first was unable to speak, but recovering her composure, she hastily withdrew her hands, and left the conservatory. She and her companion then walked side by side on the velvet turf. Other parties were near enough to prevent their being together from being noticed as having any thing remarkable in it, but still they kept sufficiently aloof from all to have their conversation entirely without listeners.

"I had your letter," said Frances, "and am here—according to your wish, and our—our secret is still safe;—but, Vincent, this must be the last time we meet, unless my father will countenance our attachment. I have suffered too much already to desire to continue a correspondence that I now feel I ought never to have permitted."

Vincent, for such was her companion's name, addressed her

with the greatest tenderness and respect, and explained to her, admitting, at the same time, how injudiciously he had acted, the circumstances by which the letter she had alluded to reached her. He had, after a long absence, returned unexpectedly to England with papers of importance for government. Finding himself at ———, on his way to London, he procured a horse, and, at midnight, rode over to the hall; seeing a light in the room which Frances formerly, and, as he believed, still occupied as a sitting-room, he had climbed the wall in hope of seeing her, and delivering a letter to her. He fell, but was unhurt. He then returned to a wood near the house where he had left his horse, and rode back full gallop to ———. On his return he found he had lost the letter, but it was too late to retrace his steps, and from the nature of his charge he was obliged to continue his journey to London. He had heard at ——— of the intended *fête* at Whitcombe, and was resolved to attend it, if, through any of his friends, he could get there; this had suggested the idea of writing to Frances, and praying her to meet him, as he had something most important to communicate to her. They continued a long time in conversation, and, from the extreme earnestness of Vincent, and the anxious attention exhibited by his fair listener, it was evident that the subject was one of all-absorbing interest. At the turning of one of the walks, and when out of sight of any one, Frances extended her hand, which Vincent raised to his lips, and then, pressing it tenderly, he quitted her. Frances stooped down to look at a flower, and her tears gemmed its beautiful cup. In a few minutes she had gained sufficient command over herself to be able to mix with the parties near her; and to a common observer there was nothing unusual in her manner or appearance.

The festivities lasted till a late hour, and the Neville party returned home much pleased.

On the second morning after the *fête* at Whitcombe, Frances sent to beg her father would allow her to see him alone in his library. There was nothing very unusual in this request. Sir Arthur often had little friendly and confidential gossiping with his girls, and was always anxious to know, and, as far as he could do so, to meet all their wants and wishes.

"Well," said the old man, when she entered the room; "what does my dear Frances want?—more plants—some new birds—or——"

Frances was silent; and when her father, repeating his enquiry, looked up, he plainly perceived she was not come to him on a matter of ordinary interest. She was deadly pale, and trembled violently. He drew a chair towards his own, and, with considerable anxiety, made her sit down by him, and taking her hand in one of his, and patting her neck with the other, tried to reassure her by telling her not to fear to trust him with any thing that interested her. Frances partially recovered her self-possession, and then in a hurried and disturbed way, and with many tears and sighs, acquainted him that she felt very unhappy; that her affections had long been engaged; and she asked his forgiveness for having concealed it from him. Here she was silent, and her tears fell upon the old man's hand.

Sir Arthur pressed her head against his bosom. Somehow or other his voice was so thick that for three or four minutes he could not speak. At length he inquired whether she knew the person who had excited this interest. Frances said she did not; and she then had the painful task to explain to her father how she had become acquainted with Mr. Vincent, while staying at the house of a lady whom she had been permitted to visit four years ago. They had seen much of each other, and both being young, had entered into an engagement to live for each other, but yet to conceal their attachment till Vincent returned from an appointment his foster-father had procured him abroad,

and should be able to ask Sir Arthur's consent to their union. Frances proceeded to assure her father that no one but themselves had been aware of this attachment, and declared upon her honor that Vincent had never corresponded with her, or written but one letter to her, since they parted at ——.

"And why," asked Sir Arthur, "am I now made a party to this—this—clandestine proceeding? Your confidence, Frances, has been withheld so long, that——"

"Hear me, sir," said poor Frances: "I feared to tell you; not because you are unkind, but because I felt I was wrong, and had not courage to do right. This letter"—here she drew forth a sealed letter, and offered it to her father—"this letter was written before he went. I—I never delivered it to you."

He fixed his eyes sternly on the poor trembler, and hastily took the letter. "I suppose," said he in a low tone, "I am to participate in the shame and disgrace that are so evidently associated with this business? Well—let me know all." Before he broke the seal he paused for a few minutes, as if to collect himself. He threw himself back in his chair and looked at his daughter, who had buried her face in her hands.

"I have asked you, Frances, who this person is?"

"I believed him to be, when he wrote that letter, an orphan; the adopted son of the clergyman at ——. He has told me he is a—natural child!" and here she gave way to a full burst of sorrow.

The proud Sir Arthur Neville bit his lip, and grasped convulsively the arm of his chair. "Go on, madam! Do you, or does he, happen to know of whom?" Frances fell upon her knees, and held up both her hands clasped in agony.

This painful scene was interrupted by the hurried step of some one approaching the room. Sir Arthur hardly had time to raise Frances from her posture of contrition and prayer, when a servant entered with a letter, which he said had been

brought from Whitcombe. It was marked "immediate," and the man added, "the messenger had ridden very hard, and had told the servants that Sir Ralph was taken very ill." On his retiring, Sir Arthur broke the seal, and found it was from Musters, Sir Ralph's own man; saying that Sir Ralph had had a fit, but that he had partially recovered from it, and, as far as he could make himself intelligible, seemed desirous to see Sir Arthur. The note also stated that another messenger had been sent off to ———, to summon Mr. Hardman, Sir Ralph's medical attendant.

Sir Arthur did not hesitate a moment upon what he should do. Having told Frances she had better retire, he rang his bell, and ordered his carriage immediately. He had not yet opened Vincent's letter, and he now determined not to do so till he could examine its contents without fear of interruption, and with greater calmness and composure than he felt he, at that moment, possessed.

After passing through the park-gates, he broke the seal, and unfolded the letter. It stated very nearly what Frances had declared—that he was, he believed, an orphan, and had no knowledge of his parents; but that Providence had raised him up a friend and protector in Mr. Vincent, the clergyman of ———, who had educated and adopted him, and had even suffered him to assume his name. He owned his attachment to Miss Neville, but felt that he was acting dishonorably to accept any pledge from her without Sir Arthur's sanction. The letter then stated he was going abroad, having been appointed, by his foster-father's interest, private secretary to a gentleman in an official and responsible situation; that on the eve of departure he had resolved to throw himself on Sir Arthur's generosity for pardon for Frances and for himself; and declaring that both had resolved to take no further step without Sir Arthur's forgiveness.

Sir Arthur read the letter two or three times, and then ejaculated, "my sanction—my forgiveness! This is indeed a strange mixture of delicacy and presumption! And Frances too. The prospects, the happiness of her whole life ruined." After a pause of a few moments his thoughts again broke forth in words. "An orphan—the adopted son of—God knows who—nay worse—confessing himself to be a—Blood of the Nevilles! The heir of my house to be compromised with an adventurer! Nameless—unknown—baseborn!"

While giving way to these passionate bursts of feeling, the carriage entered the gates of Whitcombe, and Sir Arthur soon found himself in the hall, where Musters received him. He was requested to walk into the library. The valet gave a very bad account of his master, but informed Sir Arthur the medical man had arrived, and was at that moment with Sir Ralph. He then retired to see whether Sir Arthur could be admitted to the invalid's presence.

In a few minutes he returned, ushering in Mr. Hardman, the medical attendant, a hale, hearty-looking man, between forty and fifty years of age, the established "doctor" of all the country round, and, though bluff, and somewhat forward and vulgar in his manner, kind-hearted at bottom, and, happily for the circle in which he moved, of acknowledged skill in his profession.

"How d'ye do, my dear sir?" said he, giving a hearty shake to the hand Sir Arthur extended to him. "Musters, let me say a few words in private to Sir Arthur; but be near—we shall want you." The valet bowed and left the room.

"Sir Arthur," said the son of Æsculapius, as the door was closed, "it's all up I fear with poor Sir Ralph!"

"Heavens! Mr. Hardman. What is the matter?"

Mr. Hardman thrust his hands into his breeches pockets, pinched his lips together, and raised his eyebrows. After a

short pause, and looking steadily at Sir Arthur, he said, "I'll tell you;—a knock on the head——and internal injury besides."

"A knock on—what! has any violence——"

"Pooh! no—a fit! a sharp one; and happening to know something of his constitution, I don't think his life is worth that——" and here he very elegantly swept the palm of one hand across the other. "And, what's worse, I fear—I very much fear, he may go off very suddenly!"

"This is indeed awful news! It seems he has mentioned my name, and appears desirous to see me. Can I be admitted to him?"

"I must have an hour's quiet for him; can you spare us that?"

Sir Arthur said he should remain till he could see the invalid; and desired he might not be the cause of Mr. Hardman's absence from his charge. The doctor returned to Sir Ralph's bedside, leaving Sir Arthur occupied with the various painful thoughts to which the events of the last few hours had naturally given rise. In a much shorter time than Hardman had supposed his patient would be awake, Sir Arthur received a hasty summons to the sick chamber. Sir Ralph was sitting up in bed, supported by Hardman, but evidently in a sinking state. When Sir Arthur entered he was speaking in a broken and incoherent manner, desiring "that Sir Arthur Neville and Ellen Gray should come to him; but begging that his father might not know it."

Sir Arthur approached the bed and took the sufferer's hand. "I am here Sir Ralph—but do not exert yourself." Sir Ralph recognised him, and said, "thank you, Neville." After a short pause he again spoke. "That ruffian brother—bring Ellen—well—I was punished—our house falls—no child—no—Neville, I was married to Ellen, but I basely"——He fell back exhausted.

Hardman looked at Sir Arthur and shook his head. He went to the table for a restorative for his patient. When he returned he tried to raise Sir Ralph, who again attempted to speak, but a convulsion ensued, and—all was over!

Musters was summoned from the adjoining room, where he and Mrs. Walters were in attendance, and Sir Arthur went and intimated to the old and faithful superintendent that her master had breathed his last. He then gave orders that a messenger should immediately be dispatched to desire the attendance of Sir Ralph's man of business, a lawyer living in the neighbouring post town, and, in the presence of Hardman, Musters, and the housekeeper, placed his seal upon an *escritoire*, at which Sir Ralph was in the habit of writing, and which it was observed he always locked up with scrupulous care. Having fulfilled these offices of friendship and kindness, he ordered his carriage, and desiring to be sent for in case his presence should be required, he returned to the hall.

Sir Arthur's family were deeply shocked at the intelligence he brought them, for they had so recently seen Sir Ralph in the midst of gaiety and seeming health, that his sudden removal from this world had something in it peculiarly awful and affecting. Frances did not appear, excusing herself on the ground of indisposition. Dinner—for people must dine—passed off very heavily, and all attempts to enliven it by conversation failed.

The next morning Sir Arthur desired to see Frances in the library. She had appeared at the family breakfast as usual, and, though she looked pale, her manner was calm and collected. The fact is, she felt that a load that had long oppressed her was removed. She had been burdened with a secret,—a very dear one it is true,—but it had placed her in a false position with those she loved and respected, and her having made her father her confidant had relieved her.

When she entered Sir Arthur's room, she went forward as usual, took his hand, and kissed his cheek.

"Sit down, Frances," said the baronet. "I am too much affected by what has occurred, both at home and at Whitcombe, to be able, even if I were willing, to give unnecessary pain to those I love; but," he continued, "as my interest in you and Blanche is paramount to every thing, unfit as I am for the trial, after what I was called upon to witness yesterday, I must meet this new difficulty as becomes your father." He then assured her he had read the letter with care. He admitted it was respectful and straightforward; but he was called upon to judge on other grounds, and he must say at once that the condition of the writer totally disqualified him for the position he seemed to desire to hold in the Neville family. Sir Arthur further observed that the signature was Vincent; but he understood his daughter to say he had, since writing it, acquainted her he had the additional disadvantage of being illegitimate. Frances bowed assentingly.

"The fault is not his. He must thank those who have left him, knowing it must be so, a heritage of——but I am leaving the subject. I suppose I may ask if he knows his parents?"

Frances looked down and shook her head. After a short silence, however, she seemed to recover her energies, and with a tolerably steady voice and calm manner told her father that, had they not been interrupted when she was with him the previous day, she should then have told him all, as far as she herself knew it. She said she had seen Vincent once, in the presence of several persons, since his return, and he had acquainted her with the following circumstances. During his absence he had received several letters from his protector, and, latterly, allusion had been made to the possibility of discovering who were his parents. A torn copy of a letter had been found among some papers in a cottage, in which, in the most eloquent

and passionate language, protection was implored for a child, not then born. There was neither signature nor address to the letter, but Mr. Vincent thought it valuable, as he connected it in some way with his foster-child.

Sir Arthur could hardly help smiling. "This Mr. Vincent must be a very sanguine person. It is almost childish to ask how he can connect a torn paper, without a name in it—neither signed nor addressed—with this person? However, proceed."

The cottage had been inhabited by a young woman, who was believed to be living under a feigned name, and who died in her confinement. No one seemed to know who she was, and there were no means found for supporting her child; he was, therefore, placed with other orphans. Three years after Mr. Vincent went to the living, and, wherefore does not appear, but he took the boy, educated him, and has since provided for him.

"I confess," said Sir Arthur, "all this seems to me very vague. Have you any thing further to say?"

"There was also part of another letter in another handwriting; but it was so worn and mutilated that little of it could be deciphered. What was legible seemed to be full of invective about a child."

"The mother's name then has not appeared?"

Frances did not know. Indeed, the poor girl was so exhausted by what she had gone through, that she begged her father would allow her to retire. Sir Arthur looked at her, "more in sorrow than in anger," and saw she was nearly fainting. He caught her in his arms, and rang the bell violently. He kissed her as he placed her nearly insensible on the sofa, and left her to the care of Alice.

Sir Arthur had not made his sister acquainted even with that part of the tale Frances had told him the previous day. He

knew she would feel even more strongly than he did himself, what could not but be considered a great scandal upon the family. Having had the misfortune to lose his son in his infancy, Sir Arthur had hoped his daughters, whose fortunes were greatly increased by that event, would have married according to their rank and expectations, and that their descendants, taking the name of Neville, would be worthy successors to, and supporters of the family honors. This, were he to sanction this attachment, would, in Frances's case, be utterly out of the question. He could neither feel satisfied himself, nor expect those with whom he had associated in the world to be pleased, at the fortunes and name of Neville being transferred to, and borne by, the offspring of an unknown adventurer; for in this light only could he view Vincent. Sir Arthur's mind was therefore made up, and he resolved to write a decided refusal to acknowledge him as a suitor to Frances.

He was occupied on his letter to Vincent when he received a note from the late Sir Ralph's man of business, requesting his presence the following morning at Whitcombe, as it would be necessary to read the will, and go through other business, at which the legal gentleman desired Sir Arthur's attendance. He was also "advised" that Sir Ralph had nominated him one of his executors. The appointment was of very recent date, and a note appended expressed Sir Ralph's earnest desire that Sir Arthur would undertake the office. He felt much surprised at such a mark of consideration, and would willingly have been spared it; he did not, however, feel justified in refusing to accede to the late baronet's request, and was prepared to enter upon his unexpected duties the next day. The completion of his letter to Vincent was deferred.

Early the following morning Sir Arthur started on his journey to Whitcombe. His arrival there was the signal for commencing the business upon which various persons who were in the

house (but few of whom were known to Sir Arthur) had been called together. The will contained nothing that was very remarkable. Having no heir by his marriage, he left the great bulk of his property to the lawful successor to Whitcombe, expressing a wish that the baronetcy, which would be extinct with him, should if possible be restored. The servants were remembered, and handsome legacies left to Hardman, and to one or two other friends. He also desired that certain boxes of papers, marked "private," should, in case of his dying before they were destroyed, or otherwise disposed of, be placed in Sir Arthur Neville's hands.

Sir Arthur consented to undertake the duties imposed upon him, and had the papers placed in his carriage.

His first care when he arrived at home, and had somewhat recovered from the fatigue he had undergone, was to finish the interrupted letter to Vincent. He succeeded at last in expressing himself to his own satisfaction. He had no desire unnecessarily to wound that person by too marked allusion to the *most* objectionable part of his history, and still his wish not to omit it altogether had occasioned him great difficulty. He therefore took care to show he had been made acquainted with every circumstance, and concluded by declaring clearly, and most firmly, his determination not to sanction an union between him and his daughter. The letter concluded with a powerful appeal to his feelings as a man of honor, suggesting the propriety as well as expediency of withdrawing any pretensions he might have been led to entertain in consequence of any imprudent weakness exhibited by a mere child—for such his daughter was when, by accident, he first became acquainted with her—at the same time, Sir Arthur added, that although he thus addressed him as one who had desired to know his (Sir Arthur's) sentiments, he felt quite secure in the duty and affection of his daughter, and had no apprehension that she would ever again

countenance what could not but bring down upon her the lasting anger of a father. The letter being written, Sir Arthur had to inquire of Frances how it should be addressed. He therefore desired she should attend him. When she appeared, Sir Arthur spoke to her kindly, and desired her to sit near him.

“ I have written a letter to Mr. Vincent, Frances; and, as I have not done it hastily, and without full consideration, both from my interest in your well being, and from my desire never to wound any one’s feelings, if it can be avoided, I wish you to know what I have said. You are probably prepared to hear that I cannot sanction your intercourse with that person.”

Frances sat mute, and pale, and with downcast eyes. Sir Arthur then read the letter to her. Once, at the allusion to Vincent’s unfortunate birth, she turned abruptly round, as if she would have spoken, but her hand fell, and she resumed her listening attitude. At the concluding observation respecting herself she blushed deeply, and at last burst into a passionate flood of tears. Sir Arthur did not allow her to see how much he was affected himself. After a few minutes’ pause he folded up the letter, sealed it, and placed it in Frances’s hands. “ Frances! to show my confidence in you, I entrust that letter to you, to be delivered without loss of time. Your secret is safe; no one knows it but ourselves.” He then rose, and led Frances to the door. He wished to give her no opportunity to speak further upon the subject. He kissed her cheek as she left him, merely saying, “ let there be no delay.”

Upon her return to her own room, Frances sat down to write to Vincent, intending to inclose her letter in the cover that would take her father’s. After many trials, she rightly determined not to do so. She wrote the address on Sir Arthur’s letter, and obeyed his instructions to have it conveyed to Vincent without loss of time. It is not easy to define exactly the feelings by which she was agitated. In the first place, she had

not hesitated to fulfil her father's orders in sending Vincent's letter; and so far she had the satisfaction of knowing she had acted dutifully. With regard to Vincent she was still in a state of great unhappiness. For the present she felt she had virtually consented to give him up; and as they had mutually agreed when they last parted to make their future intercourse dependent upon Sir Arthur's consent to it, she also felt that the letter she had forwarded to him would likewise entirely put an end to Vincent's attempts to see her. Still, though she knew he would not take any step to meet her, she felt perfectly secure of his unalterable affection, and though she had been forbidden to see him, to correspond with him, to think of him as her husband and companion, no one had told her, *could* tell her, not to *love* him. She fancied too that now he was, as it were, disgraced, and that independently of any fault or crime of his, it was a point of honor not to cast him altogether from her. Besides, he had made her his *confidante*, had told her all his sorrows, and had communicated to her all his few faint hopes of some day being able to discover his parents. Love does not usually require many *reasons* for its indulgence; but here, thought poor Frances, were the strongest why she should still keep her love enshrined. It was a sort of treachery not to feel the deepest interest in one who had made her the depositary of his most dear secrets.

The various incidents of the few last days, the baronet's absence, and Frances's indisposition and willing retirement from observation, had left others of the small party composing the family very much to themselves. Blanche, Walter, and our young friend, were therefore thrown a good deal together, and were usually companions in their riding, driving, or walking. We have before said that Blanche was very beautiful; but her beauty, though great, was by no means her only recommendation. She united to the most attractive personal charms the

sweetest temper, and the kindest heart. Her mental qualifications were also of no mean order. Without dabbling in any of the "*ologies*" or "*onomies*," as Walter used to call them, she was well informed on subjects calculated to make her a valuable and welcome companion of the most intelligent—*spirituelle*, without sarcasm; joyous, without extravagance, or passing beyond the bounds of the purest maidenly manner; alive to, and sympathising with, all that was good and beautiful about her; with a tear for pity, and a hand for distress, she moved about a thing of glory and loveliness; the true impersonation of what Heaven meant to give to man when it created woman. That such a being should excite the admiration of any—the most cold and insensible of mortals—would be no matter of surprise; but there was one out of the two young gentlemen, her ministering esquires, who had been attracted to her by an *extra-magnetic* influence—a mystery which he believed he was privy to, (though he could not at all divine what it was about), and which was known only to Blanche and himself. He felt the charm of having any thing in common with so beautiful a being; a secret, too, so confidential that it never was alluded to but in the most indirect way, and then only acknowledged by him by a look, or smile, of half intelligence. Sometimes he was half afraid he was betraying his trust, when Blanche would turn away from his "meaning eye," color deeply, and seem to avoid him! It ended in his falling thoroughly and intensely in love with her; and he became, of course, as miserable in the hopes, and fears, and anxieties, that now beset him, as before he had been happy and free from care.

Sir Arthur Neville having written his letter to Vincent, and had his interview with Frances, felt much relieved. He was fully aware he had given his poor child great pain, but he felt consolation in the belief that he had acted justly to her and to himself, and he had no doubt that eventually her own good

sense would tell her that the decision he had come to was for her happiness. His next care was to fulfil the late Sir Ralph Whitcombe's wishes with regard to his private papers; and he was soon busied in looking over the various packets he had brought with him from Whitcombe. Some of these were marked "*to be burnt unread.*" These were of course committed at once to the flames. There were several letters left open, as if Sir Ralph had been interrupted while examining them, and they had been hurriedly put aside. Some of those referred to circumstances of his early life, illustrating too fully his extravagance and dissipation. Many were in the handwriting of Sir Ralph's father, and they dealt largely in reproaches, and threats of disinheritance, if the son did not in all respects follow his injunctions upon some matter alluded to. There was one black page in the correspondence, which made Sir Arthur tremble and turn pale. It seemed to refer to a death caused by unfair means, and about which a sum of money had been paid. Certain dark hints were given about the grave burying secrets. Sir Arthur would not read more, and the flames devoured the evidence of crime—if crime there were.

He had resumed, and nearly finished his task the following day, when a messenger arrived from Whitcombe bringing a packet, which had been overlooked, from being deposited in a different writing-table to that usually used by Sir Ralph. It had evidently been lying by for a long period. It was remarkable that all Sir Ralph's papers were marked, on the outside of the packets, with his initials; but this had no such signature. Sir Arthur opened it, and was soon deeply interested in its contents. It contained letters respecting circumstances rather alluded to than defined; and among them was one in a female hand, which strangely corresponded with the copy of the letter which Frances had mentioned as being in the possession of the clergyman at ——. It stated that the

writer was ill, and near her confinement. She prayed that if she died the child might not be refused a home. There was also in it a solemn declaration that she never had broken her promise to conceal her real name. There were a few other unfinished lines, but the letter was torn across, and it was not easy to connect them with any meaning. Neither date, superscription, nor signature were left. Another letter, in a scarcely legible hand, announced the death of Mrs. Combe, after giving birth to a child. It stated that the infant was weak, and likely soon to follow its mother to the grave.

Sir Arthur read these letters with great attention. They bore veidence of age; and it seemed likely they had been undisturbed since the death of Sir Ralph's father. There was enough of mystery about them to make Sir Arthur feel a strong interest in discovering what they referred to, and he resolved to send for the late Sir Ralph's legal adviser, and consult him upon the subject. He now half regretted that he had destroyed the letter in which he feared he had discovered allusions to a dreadful crime. Those he had last perused showed there was some great object to be answered by keeping the mother of the child, whose birth was announced, unknown and out of the way. Her unhappy death had probably removed all anxiety about her, personally, but it occurred very naturally to the baronet, that where there was so great a desire to conceal *her* from the world, the same cause might exist for getting rid of her offspring; and the careless way in which the weakness of the infant, and the likelihood of its soon following its mother, were alluded to, gave rise in Sir Arthur's mind to the most painful misgivings. Under these circumstances, and recollecting at the same time what had occurred in his and Hardman's presence at Sir Ralph Whitcombe's death-bed, he did not feel he was betraying a trust by asking the advice of a well-known and honorable man; and he waited in a state of great anxiety for the arrival of the con-

fidential friend whom he had called upon to assist him in his difficulty.

The meeting took place the next day; and the result, after a long consultation, was a resolution to endeavour to discover who Mrs. Combe, whose name was mentioned in the letter, was; and the particulars, if such could be got at, of Sir Ralph's connexion with Ellen Gray. As a first step, it was determined that the legal gentleman should, as soon as possible proceed to —, in order to communicate with Mr. Vincent, the clergyman, if that person were still living. It was also agreed by the two gentlemen, that in the present stage of the business the strictest secrecy should be observed. The slightest hint of what they were engaged upon might do incalculable injury; first, by putting other parties upon their guard, and next, by unnecessarily opening the character of the late Sir Ralph Whitcombe or his father to unjust animadversion and suspicion.

The examination was conducted with the greatest skill and care. As it proceeded it was necessary to admit a few other persons into a knowledge of what was passing. Hardman was one of these; and the successor to Whitcombe also took an important, an active, and an honorable part in it. It led to his relinquishing his claims, and placing all the papers, which he held as heir-at-law, into our legal friend's hands.

In about six weeks from the commencement of these proceedings, a handsome man, about thirty years of age, and dressed in deep mourning, was received in the hall of Whitcombe by the above gentleman, in his capacity of manager and trustee of the Whitcombe estates. The servants and tenants had been assembled to greet the rightful owner, the only son of the late Sir Ralph Whitcombe, *by his first marriage*.

But little remains to be added. The houses of Whitcombe and Neville soon lived on terms of great intimacy, and in the course of time old Mr. Vincent was persuaded to take a journey

all the way from ——, for the purpose of uniting his adopted son, Sir Edmund Whitcombe, to the eldest daughter of Sir Arthur Neville.

We must say one word about our early friend, who, as we have hinted, had fallen desperately in love with the fair Blanche. He could not satisfy himself whether a slight peculiarity of manner exhibited to him indicated more than acknowledgment of the handsome manner in which he could keep a lady's secret, (though he was wretched at the same time at the sort of secret), or whether he might dare to think it arose from any favorable opinion towards himself. Happily for him, Frances saw that two persons who ought to be all joyousness were any thing but at ease, and she contrived to draw the admission from him, that if he dared he would address Blanche as a lover,—“And yet,”—he began—“There she is, in the shrubbery-walk,” said Frances, “go to her——but——”

“But!”

“If I am your friend now, promise me one thing in return.” Here Frances blushed; but she smiled, and our friend felt re-assured. “I do—I will promise,” said he earnestly.

“Be silent on what occurred—*that night*.”

He stared at her in utter astonishment, but she only pointed to the shrubbery, saying—“there—go to dear Blanche.”

He *was* silent. He never, even as Blanche's accepted lover, hinted the subject to her; and he and Alice, ardently as they had desired to know “all about it,” were baffled.

So much for CURIOSITY.

YEARS HAVE PAST!

LINES FOR MUSIC.

BY R. BERNAL, M.P.

YEARS have past! since first I loved thee,
Since I own'd the first impression;
Years have past! since you reproved me
For the rash, misplaced confession.

While in silence, then, enjoying
Pleasures of untold affection,
Madly did I risk destroying
Hopes, that gave to Love, protection.

Time, from other beauties stealing,
Pilfer'd charms on you bestowing,
Hath dissolved each bitter feeling
In my heart with love o'erflowing.

Ev'ry wish to you conveying,
With a sigh, a fervent blessing;
Ev'ry pulse to me betraying,
With a pang, a thought oppressing.

In the rapture of devotion,
Of my idol fondly dreaming,
Still I mark, in wild emotion,
Angel-eyes with pity beaming.

To the vision, bright and fleeting,
Reason would oppose resistance;
But my heart delights in cheating,
With the dream, my whole existence.

MORNING.

(ON SEEING A PICTURE BY BENTLEY.)

BY B. SIMMONS, ESQ.

INSCRIBED TO THE LADY JANE MOORE.

Sento l'aura mia antica, e i dolci colli
 Veggo apparir! PETRARCH.

Up glide the vapours of the summer night—
 Lo, the broad lake is melting into light!
 And steadily and fleet, the market-boat,
 With freight of mellow fruitage is afloat.
 But yet 'tis earliest morn, the cold, the tender,
 As dimly distant from the light to be,
 As girlhood's dawning cheek from the warm splendour
 Her bridal years upon that cheek shall see:—
 The Lark—that yet is silent—sweetly loud
 From the green thicket, gushing to the cloud
 In many a tiny ring, must wheel and soar,
 Still winnowing music down to earth—before
 He catch the coming sunlight on that breast
 That now broods, kindling in its grassy nest.
 No sound of life, the Painter's ear to stir,
 But the oar's dipping, or the rustling whirr
 Of shyest water-fowl, or sudden word
 Of cheer, loosed shot-like, at the startled bird:

Now, gifted artist, where yon osiers pale,
Dip the light fringes of their graceful veil
Upon the sleeping waters, lean, and take
The cold grey tints of morn and misty lake,
And fix their fleeting hues upon thy page—
Now breathe thy spirit through them, like a god,
Until we hear their murmurs—so, let Age
Do its worst henceforth; beautifully broad,
Like thy created billows, Memory
Shall heave with proud remembrances of thee,
When thou art mouldering with the valley's clod!

O loved and lovely MORNING! not like this
Now spread before me, didst thou slowly rise
When my feet rushed with boyhood's eager bliss,
To watch thy advent in mine island-skies.
Scarce could I climb high Kilworth's utmost steep,
When thou wert there to meet me from the deep—
Bursting up brightly vigorous and brave,
As thou wert wafted in one sweep of wave
By the Atlantic's freedom-loving swell,
And heaved on giant wilderness and fell!—
The glee of all the rills! at once down-foaming,
Leaping in light from precipice and rock,
Telling the dusky woodlands Day was coming
To fill their green haunts with the unfolded flock.
The gladness of the dells!—Glenceskin's larches
From their tall stems already shake the night,
While hurrying out amid their emerald arches,
The soundless hare springs timidly to sight!
Now farthest Corrin brightens—and the tide
Of splendour, spreading, rests upon those bowers

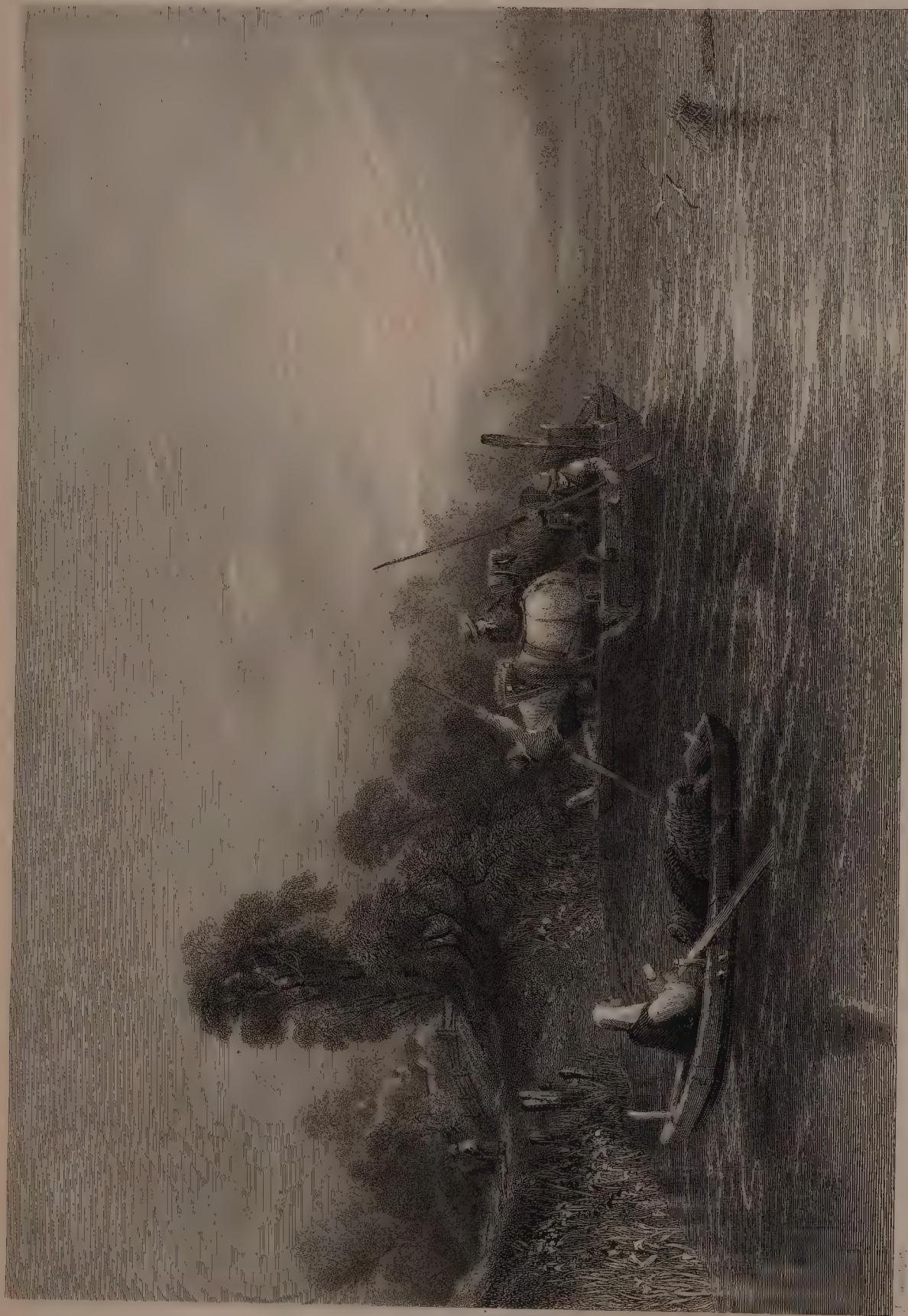


Illustration of the River scene at B. W. 1111



Hymn'd by rude bard, where loveliest Castlehyde
 Mirrors in dark-blue Avonduff its towers.*
 Still downward rolls the red refulgence—still
 Caught by grey tower, or heath-empurpled hill;
 And now the pomp of rushing glory floods
 Moorepark's sweet lawns and chestnut-waving woods,
 While, swift as arrow from the sun-god's quiver,
 Darts into laughing day my own rejoicing river.

Here, while the hues of Heaven intensely steep
 That Valley's vast luxuriance—where, along
 Each sylvan scene, still floats the influence deep
 Of Spenser's loved imperishable song;†
 Now, ere the wild-bee in this earliest hour,
 Like mountain chief before some beauty's hold,
 Blows summons of surrender to the flower,
 And spoils her cells of their delicious gold.
 Beneath Clohlea, whose topmost tower is burning
 Red as its ramparts glowed upon the day
 It fell in its defiance, vainly scorning
 The stern republic's slaughterous array;‡

* The picturesque charms of Castlehyde, on the Blackwater, County of Cork, form the subject of a very old ballad, well known in the vicinity of the scene it celebrates.

† The scenery alluded to in the following verses, lies within the valley of the Blackwater and Funcheon, County of Cork, rivers which, under the names of the Avonduff and Fanshin, have been sanctified in song by Spenser. The poet himself resided at Kilcoleman, some miles west of this locality; but the whole of those most beautiful and romantic scenes must have been familiar to so deep a lover of nature as Spenser. The allusions to his disappointments will be readily understood by the readers of his poetry, and it is hoped they are many.

‡ The Castle of Clohlea (*i. e.* grey stone), which is boldly situated upon the Funcheon, was several times besieged; it was held for Charles I. during the civil wars, and was reduced by the forces of the Commonwealth, under Sir Charles Vavasour, who put the entire garrison to the sword.

Stretched by rent battlements whose strength was young,
When the sad banks of Mulla's neighbouring stream
For UNA sighed and her immortal wrong,
Let me once more, as in life's morning, dream—
Dream for the thousandth time, that HE to whom
The arrogance of boyhood could presume
To liken its slight sorrows—who, of yore,
“Under the foot of Mole, that mountain hoar,”
Tended his flock—the shepherd-bard sublime,
Here, where I sit, might in that elder time
Have strayed, world-wearied, on his brow the charm
Of Shakspeare's parting look—his hand still warm
From grasp of that at whose dread touch arose
Macbeth's fierce guilt, and Lear's distracting woes.
Haply the mosses of this fragrant seat
Loved the lone echoes of his exiled feet,
When sick with suing, from vain courts afar,
His only confidant the evening star,
By yonder stream he wove his wreath of glory,
And blent its voice with that divinest story.
See, from this warrior height I almost look
Upon the wide o'er-canopying ash,
And jasmine curtains of that bowery nook,
Lulled by the river's melancholy dash—
Where, day by day, I drank his dazzling book!
And where so oft, nor with less bright surprise,
Flashed those sweet tales on my enchanted eyes,
Told by that second Spenser—whose command
Called up the Past, till helm'd and mailed Romance,
And Chivalry re-burnishing the lance,
Amid mortality resumed their stand—
That king whose sceptre was enchantment's wand!

O! to re-live the glorified delight
With which, leaf-hidden by the blue-eyed May,
I read his Ivanhoe, while redly bright
The slumberous evening melted far away!
Entranced above the splendid page I lay,
With Gurth and Wamba buried in the gloom
Of the huge forest, 'neath umbrageous oaks,
Or watched the tossing of the Templar's plume,
As loud through Ashby rang the stalwart strokes.
O books—O blessings! could the yellow ore
That countless sparkled in the Lydian's store,
Vie with the opulence ye flung around me
In that glad season, when each summer tree
To Fancy's eye with wreaths of triumph crowned me,
Whispering my spirit into minstrelsy?
Green glades of Moorepark! through the amber air
Of morn, how glow your scenes supremely fair;
How long the muser's rapt and lingering gaze
O'er the wide verdure of your vale delays,
As soft it swells, to light and beauty born,
With orchards ripe, and slopes of golden corn:—
The castled steep—the ancient woods above,
And Hall white-gleaming through the stately grove:—
Below, the lapsing of blue Funcheon's wave,
Now gently gliding by the Filea's cave—
Now loud in gladness, where the bridgeway frail
Spans its swift current with a slender rail—
Mid boundless bloom, for ever stealing on,
Till, with the shyness of a bride, tis gone
To hide in Avon its transparent face,
At once absorbed into his broad embrace!

And Thou—FAIR SPIRIT!—to whose gracious eyes
And graceful name I consecrate this page—
In the low turret, decked with Ruin's dyes,
Where once the bugle blew to battle's rage,
(Now by thy spells enchanted to a bower
Melodious with the blackbird's mellow flute,
As falls lone evening's saffron-tinted hour),
Loitering above this lay, could I be mute,
Nor thank thy taste that taught the devious path
By wood and cave to wind its easy line—
Gave the pure lily a more limpid bath,
Festooned the musk-rose in a softer twine,
And bade the tresses of the nymph-like willow
Droop with a tenderer grace above the billow?
For this receive the homage deep, of one
Whose hours of life their brightest colours caught
Amid those shades—where lately, while the sun
The crimson west magnificently sought,
He framed the song (rude offering unmeet)
Now laid in reverence, LADY, at thy feet.



T Phillips R A

W 1 22

SCENES

IN

THE LIFE OF A YOUNG PORTRAIT PAINTER.

BY THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

SCENE I.

"INDEED, my dear friend, you will destroy your health by this incessant labour," said Charles Dormer, a young barrister in the Temple, to Frederick Emmerson, an artist, as they sate in the studio of the latter. "You should take exercise, and be more in the open air than you are, or you will inevitably kill yourself."

"It is not the want of air or exercise that injures me, I assure you, Charles; it is the desire, the burning desire, that my pictures should satisfy not only others, but myself. You know not what it is to work for hours, with a fair ideal in the imagination which the hand in vain endeavours to represent; and then to feel how immeasurably short falls the attempt to pourtray what is so intensely felt. Look here," and he drew back a curtain and exposed to view, a picture representing two young girls of such exquisite beauty, that Charles Dormer uttered an exclamation of delight. "Ah! my friend, if these imperfect resemblances please you, what would be your feelings of admiration, of wonder, could you but see the originals;—then would you turn with the same dissatisfaction that I do, from these pale and imperfect representations of charms to which Lawrence

himself, who so well understood female loveliness and so admirably delineated it, would have found it impossible to render justice. Day after day, have I vainly attempted to give the canvas her smile," and he pointed to one of the faces, "which haunts me, but finding it impossible, I have endeavoured to paint that serious but sweet expression which so often pervades her countenance. This is my last attempt; but it almost maddens me to look on it; for it is no more to be compared to her than I am to Hercules."

"Nevertheless, it is lovely," said Dormer; "and the other beauty, who is she?"

"Lady Isabella Crichton, the cousin of Lady Emily."

"Lord Blasonberrie and Lady Emily Hume," said the servant of Emmerson, throwing open the door, and leaving Dormer just time to rush into a small room inside the studio, where he had previously not unfrequently ensconced himself when similarly caught by the visitors of his friend.

"Good morrow, Mr. Emmerson; we are early, but I was longing to see what progress you had made with the portraits. Why, bless my soul! they are perfect. But you have changed the expression of my daughter's; yesterday it smiled, and I was very well satisfied,—no easy matter to accomplish, Mr. Emmerson, I can tell you, when a father has but one daughter,—yet now it looks grave, and I like it, if any thing, better than before. Yes, it is perfect."

"I am made but too happy and proud, my lord, by your approbation; but I confess I have not satisfied myself."

"Come here, Emily, let me look at you—stand there, my child, near the picture—there—take off your bonnet, my love."

Lady Emily did as she was told; and even Dormer, who could see her reflected in a glass opposite the door, through the opening of which he was peeping, confessed to himself that the portrait failed to render justice to the beautiful original.

"What do you think of the picture, my child?" asked the father.

"It appears to me to be faultless, father; only, perhaps, that my cousin's resemblance is less beautiful than the original, and mine is a little too——" handsome, she would have said, but a dread of being thought desirous of a compliment deterred her from uttering the word, and she filled up the sentence by saying—"too young."

Never before had Dormer heard such a voice; low and sweet, yet distinct—there was melody in all its tones.

"Too young, Emily? O! that *is* capital. Why, to hear you, one would suppose that you were no longer in the first blush of youth. Too old, indeed! why, how old do you take my daughter to be, Mr. Emmerson?"

"About seventeen, my lord."

"Right; she is *just* seventeen, and not yet a week over her birth-day. The more I look on the portraits, the better I like them. Isabella looks round with that haughty air I have sometimes remarked in her, and Emily, in spite of the fine feathers which I insisted on her wearing, has precisely that expression I've remarked so often in her face, when nursing me when I've been laid up by the gout. I know that look well, and so I ought, for I too often call it forth by the frequent attacks, which always alarm my dear little nurse," and the fond father drew his daughter closer to his side, and bestowed a glance on her so full of affection, that her dove-like eyes became humid with tenderness. "You must come down to Blasonberrie Castle, Mr. Emmerson, when the season is over in London. You shall paint another picture of my daughter for me, and one of me for her. You see, Emily, I don't forget my promise to you of sitting for my portrait."

The simple "thank you, dear father," uttered by this lovely girl, seemed more eloquent than aught Emmerson ever

listened to before, and Dormer nearly agreed with him in this opinion.

"When may I send for the picture, Mr. Emmerson? I am longing to have it home, now that my niece has left us: it will extend your fame too."

"In a week, my lord, I hope it will be quite finished."

"Good morning, Mr. Emmerson, good morning;—take my arm, Emily." And Lord Blasonberrie and his lovely girl departed.

When Charles Dormer entered the studio again, he found Frederick Emmerson standing entranced before the picture, and so wholly engrossed by it, as to be unconscious of the presence of his friend. "No," muttered he, "I cannot bear to look on it; it has none of her beauty, none of those thousand indescribable charms, which I see, but cannot pourtray. I must——"

"Not change a single feature," interrupted Dormer; "for, be assured, your picture is as like as art can be to nature."

"Is she not more than painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love?" asked Emmerson.

"Yes, indeed, she is exquisitely beautiful; and what a voice! it is a pity she is so chary of it though, for I think she did not utter above ten words while here. Is she always so taciturn?"

"She talks but little; yet, strange to say, I never remarked it until you asked me the question."

"Those aristocratic dames, however young, are apt, I am told, to remind us of a lower degree, of the difference of our station; and there can certainly be no surer mode of effecting this than by silence."

"You wrong her, she is not proud," said Emmerson, with a warmth that evinced how deep was the interest excited by all that touched on Lady Emily Hume."

"Is she then dull, or inanimate?"

"Dull, or inanimate! You could not surely have seen her

face with its varying expression, each and all beautiful, or you would not ask this."

"How, then, do you explain her silence?"

"Now that you remind me of it, I should say that it proceeded from thoughtfulness. When painting her, I have felt a sentiment approaching to awe in the contemplation of such rare, such intellectual loveliness, something like what I believe Raphael to have experienced when painting those Madonnas we delight to look on. I could no more commence a conversation on ordinary topics with Lady Emily Hume, than I could bring myself to sing a bacchanalian song before one of Raphael's Virgins. The intelligence of her countenance precludes the suspicion of dulness, and the candour and gentleness of it banish that of pride. Had she spoken often, I could not have painted her, for her voice thrills through my frame. Her cousin, whom many might pronounce to be as handsome, never produced this effect on me."

"My dear Frederick, you are smitten—by all that is good, you are! You may well open your eyes and stare at me, like one awakened suddenly from sleep, but such is the fact."

"You offend, you pain me, by this ill-timed pleasantry, Charles; do not, if you love me, resume it. It seems like a profanation to make her the subject of a jest."

"By Jove! I was never more serious in my life, Frederick; take care of yourself, or yours will be a desperate case. Be warned in time."

"As well might I presume 'to love some bright particular star' as this peerless lady; both are alike beyond my reach; and know you not the line—

'None without hope e'er loved the brightest fair?'

"Yes, and the sequel too—

'For love will hope where reason would despair,'"

said Dormer, looking archly at his friend.

"No, no, the sentiment inspired by this lovely girl is not love; it is something totally different,—awe, reverence, devotion, if you will, but not that passion experienced by every-day men, for pretty women. Never do I look on her without being reminded of the lines in *Comus*—

'A thousand liveried angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal.'"

"Well, if this be not love, I know not what is. Deceive not yourself, Frederick, with regard to your own feelings, lest you discover when too late that you are their dupe."

Thus saying, Charles Dormer hurried from the studio, to avoid the repetition of the denial of the truth of his suspicions, which he perceived Emmerson was about to utter, leaving him angry, and agitated at the expression of them.

"I thought he knew me better," soliloquized Emmerson. "In love, indeed! Bah! how I dislike this term, used by fashionable libertines to express some temporary caprice often felt for an unworthy object, by lawyers' clerks, ay, and even by men-milliners, to define the gross inclination excited towards some dress-maker, or retailer of tapes and bobbins. Beautiful Lady Emily! how different is the sentiment you excite in my breast! Even here, in the privacy of my studio, which this faint shadow of your loveliness seems to consecrate, I no more durst dwell on your pictured face, though wrought by my own hand, with other or freer gaze than that with which the devotee regards the idol of his worship, than I durst look into your deep azure eyes when your presence transforms this homely room

into a temple, whose sanctity I tremble to invade by the indulgence of one unholy desire, one earthly passion. Yet I can examine the likeness of the Lady Isabella Crighton with as much calmness as if it were the portrait of my grandmother. Others, in my place, might feast upon the exquisite beauty of the resemblance I have wrought, lovely Lady Emily, faint and unworthy as it is, when compared with you; but I approach it with awe, and shrink before the calm and pure expression of the inanimate eyes as I should do before the radiance of the living ones."

SCENE II.

Pale and thoughtful, Frederick Emmerson stood before his easel, on the day following the one described, and on which was placed a portrait nearly finished. Seated in a chair was a man of about fifty-five, whose rotund form displayed a vast expanse of white Marseilles, in the shape of a waistcoat, around which a glossy blue coat, with bright gilt buttons, formed an unpicturesque background. A huge bunch of seals, suspended from a massive gold chain that hung from the pocket of his nether garment, furnished occupation for one hand, which was continually playing with them; while the other, on the last finger of which sparkled a large diamond ring, reposed on the arm of his chair. In his well-plaited *chemise* frill shone a *solitaire* of considerable value, which he from time to time arranged, so as to exhibit it still more conspicuously. The rubicund face that protruded above the somewhat tightened neckcloth, told a tale of long continued indulgence in the pleasures of the table. The chin reminded one of the breast of the pelican, and seemed filled with some portion of the produce of the purple grape, so freely quaffed by its owner; and though closely packed beneath the cravat, was continually endeavouring

to overpass its boundary. The lips were thick and dry looking; the nose, of large dimensions, was of a still deeper tint of red than the cheeks; and the eyes resembled nothing so much as bottled gooseberries. The forehead retreated so suddenly, that it gave the notion of having so done to avoid a contact with the fiery red nose beneath, which seemed to have parched up the natural crystaline of the eyes that twinkled near them. A dark juvenile-looking wig crowned the head, and ill suited the light colored and bristly eyebrows, which denoted the natural hue of the departed hair.

"May I look, Mr. Emerson?"

"If you desire it, sir; but I think it would be better to wait until the portrait is more advanced."

"No! no! I'll look at once," and Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson advances to the picture. "Don't you think that the face is too red? I surely can't be said to have a red face?"

"It does not strike me as having too much color."

"Take off some of the red, I'm sure 'twill look better."

"It really would injure the general effect."

"Hang general effect! what care I for it."

"But my picture, sir."

"Your picture! *mine*, you mean; and, as it is mine, I must have it done in my own way."

"But the likeness, sir."

"Ay, the likeness! that's the very thing I mean, that's what I want, to have it made more like; for at present it is not at all like, not a bit; there is ten times, ay, twenty times too much color. And the nose! you can't say the nose is like. Why, it's positively redder than the cheeks, and that's not natural, is it? No one's nose is redder than the cheeks. You must change all that, indeed you must. When you have changed the cheeks and nose, I'll tell you what next to do, for the eyes and mouth must be altered, totally altered."

Emmerson nearly groaned, and felt tempted to decline again touching the picture; but the recollection of a mother and two sisters wholly dependent on him, checked the impulse.

Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson again seated himself, and said—
“Now look at me, and you will see that my nose is *not* red, and that the cheeks are quite of another color.”

Emmerson looked, and saw that the exertion of moving, and perhaps also the displeasure experienced by his sitter, had rendered the face so much more red, that his portrait looked pale in comparison with the original. Again the dispirited artist groaned internally over his disagreeable task, as he took up his pencil.

“I don’t think you paint diamonds well,” said Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson. “Why can’t you make them shine? Look at this pin, and ring; see how they glisten, and show different colors, red, green, and yellow, and send out rays! Why can’t you paint them so, instead of merely putting a spot of white paint, that looks like nothing but a dab of bread sauce?”

Emmerson’s servant now announced that Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson’s carriage had arrived, and in it a lady who desired to come up.

“A friend of mine, whom I wish to see my picture—may she be admitted, Mr. Emmerson?”

“Certainly, sir.”

And in walked the lady. “So glad to see you, *dear* Mr. B. T.; hope I haven’t kept you waiting; longing to see your portrait. Dear me, how beautiful it is. The very image. Did I ever?—no, I never, saw such a likeness. Just your smile too. It’s quite perfect. Pray, Mr. Emmerson, don’t touch it any more, for fear of injuring the resemblance.”

“Humph!” muttered or rather growled Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson, upon which the lady cast an anxious glance at him. “Don’t you think it is a great deal too red in the face, Mrs. Meredith?”

"O dear! yes; a *great* deal too red, ten times too much color. How could I be so stupid as not to have seen that at the first glance! But I was so delighted, and so flurried, that——"

"But don't you observe that the nose is unlike? it's positively even more red than the cheeks."

"Well, so it is; where were my eyes not to have seen it? O! Mr.——I beg your pardon, your name——"

"Emmerson, madam."

"O! Mr. Emmerson, you must be very particular, *I*—that is, *we*—would not have his nose painted the least different from what it is for all the world. Every one says he has such a good nose, quite a pet of a nose. And now that I look steadily at the picture, I declare I begin to think it is not half so like as I at first thought it. Why, it's much too old—yes, positively twenty years too old, and hasn't got that very remarkable sort of a look that Mr. B. T. has sometimes. I wish you could paint *that* look."

"I told you, Mr. Emmerson, that it wasn't like; and you see this lady, who knows my face better perhaps than any one else, is of the same opinion. *I* don't care about the matter myself, but one likes to have one's friends satisfied, you know."

"Paint the cheeks a delicate pink, Mr. Emmoton, just like what you see; and the nose not a bit red, for Mr. B. T.'s nose never is red; and make the figure much slighter, in fact, exactly like his; and give the face that very remarkable look that his has sometimes. Now, pray mind this, and then I'm sure the picture will be as like as possible."

"Yes, do what Mrs. Meredith tells you; no one knows my face better than she does."

"I know it by heart," whispered the lady, which whisper produced a gentle tap on the arm from Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson, and sundry "ha, ha's" from her.

The announcement of another sitter, sent away Mrs. Meredith and her friend, who left the studio declaring that they would return in a few days, and that they hoped to find the picture entirely changed.

SCENE III.

"I hope you will be as successful as you always are, Mr. Emmerson," said a lady in widow's weeds, the paleness of whose face, though it told of sorrow and delicate health, impaired not its beauty.

"I trust I shall be able to satisfy you, madam," was the reply, as Emmerson arranged his canvas, and looked at his colors.

"I have brought his uniform, as I wish to have him painted in it," and a deep sigh heaved the bosom of the speaker.

"How I should like to have your picture, mother, to hang up in my berth—but no, I wouldn't like the other midshipmen or sailors to see it; I'd rather have a miniature, to keep in my desk, with my Bible and all your letters, or to have tied round my neck, that I might look at it whenever I had a moment to myself. Whenever I get any prize money, I'll send it home to have your miniature done for me, mother, that I will."

The speaker was a beautiful boy of about twelve years old, with a singular mixture of gentleness and manliness in his countenance, that at one glance excited a strong interest in his favor in the sensitive mind of Frederick Emmerson. The boy looked continually towards his mother with such tenderness beaming in his handsome face, that the artist caught the beautiful expression, and ere more than two hours had elapsed, fixed it on his canvas. During that period the mother had more than once been compelled to leave her seat, and pretend to be occupied in examining the drawings that were hung round the

room, in order that she might wipe away the tears that continually started to her eyes; as the thought of the approaching separation with her son, the only tie that now bound her to existence, haunted her. But her emotion escaped not the observation of the youth, and a tear springing into his deep blue eyes, denoted his sympathy with it. Once or twice he rose from his chair, and embraced her, whispering words of love, that only increased the gushing tears he sought to arrest.

"When I am an Admiral, mother, you shall have as good a house as we had once, ay, and a carriage too, and you shall come on board my ship in *my* boat, manned by my sailors," and the eyes of the generous boy sparkled with animation and pleasure at the anticipation; while those of the fond mother glistened through her tears.

Frederick Emmerson requested her to sit by her son, saying as an excuse for so doing, that he could paint his picture better if the sitter's eyes were not continually turning in search of her across the room.

"Then I must hold her hand in mine, if I may not look at her," said the youth, "for I shall be with her so short a time, that I want to have as much of her as possible," a *naïve* avowal repaid by a glance of inexpressible love by the mother.

There she sat, her eyes beaming with tenderness, fixed on her son; and Emmerson, charmed with the maternal beauty of the character of her countenance, rapidly made one of his most successful likenesses, while the mother and son were totally unconscious that he was not painting the latter.

"May I now look at the portrait, Mr. Emmerson?" asked the lady, after two hours patient sitting from the time she had changed her position, yet so wholly engrossed was she by her melancholy reflections, as to have forgotten the lapse of time.

"Pardon me, madam, for wishing this young gentleman to see my work first."

The youth left his seat, and, on advancing near the easel, clapped his hands with delight, and exclaimed—" 'Tis she ! 'tis she !—O ! mother, dear mother, how happy I am !— see, see, so exactly like you, and just as you have looked ever since I was made a midshipman."

The boy hugged his mother with rapture, and then turning to Frederick Emmerson, seized his hand, and wrung it, saying, " Ah ! when I'm an Admiral, you shall see that I do not forget this."

The mother, overcome by a sense of gratitude to Emmerson, for the delicacy and promptitude with which he had anticipated the wish of her son, endeavoured to thank him ; but when he held up the portrait of the beautiful boy, her full heart relieved itself by a shower of tears.

" Only wait, dear mother, till I get my first prize money, and Mr. Emmerson shall have it all, that he shall. O ! you don't know how I have longed to have your picture, that I might look at it when I am on the sea, and so far from you, that it will seem all like a dream that I can be so distant from my own dear mother."

" Words are poor, sir, to tell you how I feel your kindness," sobbed rather than spoke the mother, as she reached out her small and attenuated hand to Frederick Emmerson, while the manly boy seizing the other hand of the artist, wrung it affectionately, and repeated " Only wait till I get my prize money, and you shall see," and " When I am an Admiral all my cabin shall be covered with pictures of my mother painted by you."

Emmerson never felt half the pleasure in receiving the most munificent remuneration given him for any of his works, that he did in refusing the payment pressed on him by the grateful mother, and in the reflection that he had lightened the sorrow of separation to her noble and warm-hearted boy.

" Yes, even the poor have their enjoyments," said he, " when

their talents enable them to bestow a happiness that wealth cannot always command; and such occasions make me forget for a time the wearing cares of life, when the existence of those dear to me, depending on this poor hand, compel an exercise of it that is more than my weak frame can well support."

SCENE IV.

"You will not require me to sit long, nor frequently, I hope," said Lady Lamerton, the widow of a city knight and *millionaire*, who had bequeathed to her the greater portion of his wealth.

This lady was in her fortieth year, and had been so much less kindly treated by Nature than by Fortune, that her utmost efforts, and they were indefatigable, to supply the absence of every feminine attraction by the aid of art, only served to render her ugliness still more remarkable. A profusion of black ringlets fell over cheeks covered with rouge, and shaded eyes, whose obliquity of vision gave a peculiarly disagreeable expression to her countenance. Her lips were so unnaturally red, as to look like thin pieces of sealing-wax, and when open, displayed teeth whose decay might perhaps with reason be attributed to their proximity to their painted portals. A dress suited to blooming eighteen, and an affectation unsuited to any age, added to the disagreeable effect of this mass of ugliness, the first glance of which shocked Emmerson.

"I detest sitting, and indeed I never would have consented to have my portrait done, were it not that I have been so tormented by all my friends. I hope you will not require more than three sittings?"

"I am sorry, madam, that I cannot specify precisely what number of sittings will be necessary to complete the portrait, but I hope not a great many."

"O! that's what all you artists say. Must I take off my bonnet?"

"If you wish to be painted in your hair."

"Certainly I do. But how do you think I ought to be dressed? Lord Alverstock says I look best in a costume *à-la-Vandyke*, and Sir Henry St. Ives insists that a modern dress suits me better."

"Whichever you prefer, madam. Will you be so obliging as to be seated?"

"What! must I positively sit in that chair mounted on three high steps?"

"The light is most advantageous in that position, madam."

"Well, if it must be so; you are all just the same, always making one sit in some particular chair or corner, just as if it could make any difference."

"Be so obliging as to turn a little to the right, and look at me?"

"How tiresome! wont it do as well if I look any other way? I hate staring, or being stared at. I desired two or three of my friends to come and stay here while I am sitting, that I might not be too much bored; I wonder they have not come."

"I am afraid their presence might interrupt my labour."

"And why so, pray?"

"By preventing your sitting as tranquilly as could be desired."

"How very odd! but all you artists are just the same, always wanting one to sit as if one was screwed to one's chair."

After a pause of some minutes, during which Lady Lamerton never sat quietly, she addressed Frederick Emmerson again. "Let me see how far you have got?"

"Pray do not ask to see the picture until it is more advanced."

"Why, you have been half an hour, yes, a full half hour,

for I've had my watch in my hand all the time, and yet you do not wish to let me see what you have been doing; but that was just the way with Sir Thomas Lawrence, he couldn't bear to let people look at their portraits, the first sitting; yes, you are all the same. O dear!" (and an unsuppressed yawn followed the exclamation), "how very tiresome sitting for one's picture is. Could you not let me read, or do something to amuse myself?"

"I am sorry you——"

"So you all say; but now, do let me look, it will divert me a little."

"I hope you will excuse me, madam."

And here two or three voices on the stairs announced the arrival of visitors, and prevented the expression of impatience the lady was on the point of uttering.

"So you are come at last," said she, as two men of fashionable exteriors entered the room; "why did you not come sooner? I have been here a whole hour, yes, positively an hour by my watch, and am tired to death; and Mr. Emmerson wont let me see what he has been doing."

"I only waited to give time for some progress to be made with the picture," said one; "and I could not get away before," said the other.

"Do look, Lord Alverstock, and tell me if Mr. Emmerson has at all succeeded."

"I have done so little," said Emmerson, "that you can hardly judge."

"*Au contraire*, the sketch is very like, and promises to be excellent."

"Now let Sir Henry St. Ives see it."

The latter gentleman examined the portrait, shook his head, and then said, "Don't you think the mouth wants something?"

"Certainly, I have only sketched it, and the want of color——"

"O! yes, I see now, *it is* the want of color, and Lady Lamerton has such peculiarly red lips."

"It was one of Lawrence's great merits that he always painted the lips so very red; when I sate to him," said the lady, "he made the lips of my portrait even redder than mine."

"I deny that," said Sir Henry St. Ives, "it would be impossible; for yours are as red as my jockey's jacket, in which he won the Oaks for me last year."

"What a comparison! Did you ever hear such a one, Lord Alverstock?"

"I should have compared them to coral, but even that is too hacknied," answered his lordship, with a bow.

"Well, if my jockey's jacket does not satisfy you, what say you to the shell of a boiled lobster; for, hang me! if I ever see one without thinking of your ladyship's lips."

Peals of laughter from Lady Lamerton and Lord Alverstock followed this last speech, during which Frederick Emmerson, annoyed and disgusted, heartily wished the group away.

"Well, I shall never forget the boiled lobster," said the lady, "how very original! yet, after all, I don't think my lips are so *very* much redder than other people's,—do you, Lord Alverstock?"

"They are so much more beautiful than those of other people that no comparison can be instituted"

"How like you, Lord Alverstock, to say so; you always are so polite, and have something civil to say,—hasn't he, Sir Henry?"

"Alverstock doesn't want the art of paying compliments, I must acknowledge."

"O! then *you* think he complimented when he spoke of the beauty of my lips," said the lady, with an air of pique.

"No, in *that* instance he could not compliment; I defy him to say more of them than they deserve."

"*Apropos* of lips—did you see Mrs. Luxmore biting hers all last evening at Lady Dashwood's, to make them look red?"

"You don't say so?"

"Positively."

"Then, by Jove! her husband has a better chance of being rid of her than I thought."

"Why so? do, pray tell us?"

"Because her lips have half an inch thick of paint on them."

"Poor Mrs. Luxmore! how very shocking! But are you *quite* sure it is true?"

"Certain."

"I had no idea that any application of that sort to the lips was pernicious," said Lady Lamerton, her face assuming a look of considerable alarm, on observing which the two gentlemen in attendance on her, exchanged very comical glances, and Emmerson wondered at the unblushing effrontery with which both of them answered—

"O! to be sure not, how could *you* know anything of such things, *you* who never have occasion to use such aids."

"No, *you* could spare some of your beauty, instead of seeking to add to it."

"Have you seen my new parure of rubies and diamonds, Lord Alverstock?"

"I have not remarked them, I confess; but who can look at ornaments when you wear them?"

"Ay, that's what I say," observed Sir Henry St. Ives; "beautiful women make a great mistake when they put on rich jewels, they should leave them to be worn by ugly women, who require something to set them off."

"But when people have large fortunes, they are expected to make a suitable appearance," said the purse-proud parvenue Lady Lamerton.

"With due submission to your better judgment," observed

Lord Alverstock, "I should say that simplicity of dress in people of great wealth was a mark of refined taste."

"And I think that if rich people must show they are rich, they cannot take a better method than by having handsome carriages, a stable full of fine horses, and giving capital dinners, and plenty of them," said the baronet.

"You are so fond of horses, Sir Henry," said the lady. "But bless me! I have positively been here two hours; really, Lord Alverstock and Sir Henry, you have made yourselves so agreeable that I have not felt the time heavy since you came. I could not have remained half the time had you not been here. I hope, Mr. Emmerson, you have nearly finished the picture?"

"I have been unable, madam, to advance it much while you have been laughing, or talking."

"That's just the way with all you artists; you fancy people can sit whole hours in a chair, bored to death, without moving. But let me see it."

"Really, madam, I——"

"It's no use refusing, I must positively look," and suiting the action to the word, Lady Lamerton rose from her seat, and placed herself before the picture. After contemplating it for a few minutes, she exclaimed, "I don't think it the least like. Only look at the eyes; mine, surely, are very different?"

"Very different, indeed," said the baronet.

"The nose, too, is wholly unlike mine; and the mouth is at least twice as large. The chin may be a little like, but what is that dark thing under it? I surely have no discoloration under the chin?"

"That is the shadow produced by the chin. The portrait, madam, is not, as I previously assured you, sufficiently advanced to enable you to judge of the resemblance."

"Then why is it not, pray?"

"No picture of this size, madam, and in oil, can be sufficiently advanced in a sitting of two hours."

"So you all say, you are all just the same. Look, Lord Alverstock, do you think it has the least likeness?"

"I must say that I think it will be like; at present it is merely *ebauché*."

"I'm sorry *you* think it ever will, or ever *can* be like," said the lady, angrily; "and your last remark renders the picture more objectionable. Tell me, Sir Henry, if *you* find it resembles me?"

"I can't say I do," replied the wily baronet; "but I think with Alverstock, it has a very *débauché* look."

"Sir!" said Emmerson, his pale cheek becoming red with anger.

"I only repeat what Lord Alverstock said, Mr. Emmerson."

"Yes, Sir Henry only repeated what Lord Alverstock remarked," interrupted the lady, "and I think it very improper that you should have given me that sort of look."

A peal of laughter from Lord Alverstock seemed to increase the ire of Lady Lamerton, and made Sir Henry look amazed. "I said no such thing," said the peer, as soon as his laughter subsided enough to permit him speak, "I merely said the picture was but *ebauché*, and not being aware that Sir Henry does not know French, I could not imagine the word could be mistaken."

The baronet looked angry, and the lady offended. The first muttered something about the folly of using French words when English ones would do better; and the latter said, that "for her part, she never regretted her ignorance of a language which she was quite sure was very objectionable."

It was clear that the lady was offended with the peer for having admitted that the portrait bore any resemblance to her,

and his laughter at the mistake relative to the French phrase added to her displeasure.

Lord Alverstock and Sir Henry St. Ives, both men of ruined fortunes, were seeking to retrieve them by a marriage with the rich widow. The baronet, gross and ignorant, was more suited to the lady's taste; but the rank of the peer disposed her to barter her gold for his coronet. It was while her mind was thus undecided, that the good breeding which prompted Lord Alverstock to avoid wounding the feelings of Emmerson by agreeing in the unjust condemnation pronounced by Lady Lamerton on her portrait, gave the first advantage over him to his rival; who, not only still more needy in circumstances, but infinitely less delicate in mind, was ready to assent to whatever the lady, whose wealth he aspired to possess, asserted.

The party soon withdrew; and a short time afterwards, Emmerson read in the newspaper the announcement of the marriage of Sir Henry St. Ives to the Lady Lamerton, relict of the late Sir Matthew Lamerton, Knight, of Clapham Rise; a union which the scene in his studio had not a little tended to facilitate. The portrait was never completed; for the simple reason, that the lady deeming it unlikely that the artist could render justice to her charms, never returned again to favor him with a sitting, and forgot to pay the half price generally advanced on the commencement of a picture.

ON LEAVING ENGLAND,

1840.

BY SIR HESKETH FLEETWOOD, BART. M.P.

I SAIL—we part—yes, England, part from thee,
 My native land, the beautiful, the free !
 And who may tell, *when* next we meet, or *how*,
 Or where the friends I fondly cherish now ?
Pause then, one moment, ere the anchor heave,
 Let retrospection glance o'er all I leave.
 Before—a new world ; and behind—an old ;
 Here, joys all counted ; there, as yet untold :
 Sweet scenes of childhood, and the sunny spot
 A mother's love hath hallow'd,—ne'er forgot ;
 The hopes of youth, realities of man ;
 Life's priceless value, though so brief its span—
 All crowd upon my memory, and dwell
 Upon my tongue, to clog its last farewell !
 What though dark shadows of regret o'ercast
 With clouds of night, the pathway of the past ;
 While, in the distance, skies more bright appear,
 They too may fade—as those *have faded here*.
 Gone is the past !—the present hour alone,
 Is all we hold, or justly call our own ;
 Did we desire to live that past again,
 With all its joys and pains—'twere worse than vain—
 Too late—regret cannot dispel the gloom
 Which curtains round the chambers of the tomb.

Unfurl the sail then—yes!—the anchor weigh,
I must forget I lived before to-day—
New scenes—new hopes—new all—*save memory*,
That fades not!—*that* alone forgets to die!
Farewell then, England!—thus I break the spell
Which weaves a charm round those who in thee dwell;
Seeking strange lands, across the wide, wild sea,
England, dear England! now I part from thee!

TO THE MUSIC OF ONE WHO HAD CEASED TO DESERVE
THE LOVE OF A POET.

BY HENRY REEVE, ESQ.

OH, God! that ever pangs so sharp
Can shoot from chords so finely moving,
That every note which leaves her harp
Should lash me for the crime of loving!
As if the minstrelsy whose spell—
Whose heavenly craft—my soul pervaded,
Had sold its art to play the knell
Of hopes that lied, of dreams that faded.

To think that on this summer's night
When air had ears to catch our wooing,
The strains which once were all delight
Are dissonant as my undoing:
To know that on the throbbing wires
Which still respond beneath her finger,
The promise of my life expires,
Too sweet—but ah! too false—to linger.

WRITTEN ON LEAVING A BALL AT ALMACKS.

BY THE HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY, M.P.

OH! she came on my sight as the bloom of the spring
 Steals over the woodlands with hues rich and rare;
 While her words seemed the notes which the nightingales sing
 When moonbeams are smiling so soft through the air.

And though it be true that the breath of the rose
 Can yield the best fragrance that Nature has given,
 Yet fondly I think that *her* sigh can disclose
 'The only *true* sweetness that lives under Heaven.

So lovely is she, that it seems as if Nature,
 Right pleased with her work—from her bounty above—
 Had bestowed her best gifts on that beautiful feature,
 To make it the birth-place—the altar of love.

SONG.

BY R. M. MILNES, ESQ. M.P.

GRIEF sat beside the fount of tears,
 And dipt her garland in it,
 While all the paly flowers she wears
 Grew fainter every minute;

Joy gamboled by the other side,
 In gay and artless guise,
 And to her gloomy sister cried,
 With laughter in her eyes—

“ Oh! prithee leave that stupid task,
That melancholy fountain;
I go in Pleasure’s sun to bask,
Or dance up Fancy’s mountain.”

“ Insolent fooler!—go—beware,”
Said Grief in moody tone,
“ How thus you frivolously dare
Approach my solemn throne.”

And then on Joy’s fair wreath she threw,
With sideward glance of malice,
Some drops of that embitter’d dew,
Fresh from a poison’d chalice.

But Joy laugh’d on—“ In vain—in vain,
You try to blight one flower;
That which you meant for fatal bane
Shall prove my brightest dower;—

“ Friendship and Love on every leaf
Shall wear the pearly toy,
And all who shrink from tears of Grief
Shall pray for tears of Joy.”

THE PEARL-LILY.

BY THE LADY EMMELINE STUART WORTLEY.

ADDRESSED TO MISS LOUISA H. SHERIDAN, ON HER RECEIVING FROM HER FEMALE FRIENDS, A BEAUTIFUL REPRESENTATION OF A LILY IN PEARLS, "AS A TRIBUTE TO HER TALENTS AND VIRTUES."

WHEN the crown'd Lily, o'er the waters leaning,
Sheds o'er their restlessness its sweet repose,—
Its Shadow hath a motion and a meaning,
And charms the unquiet current as it flows!

The soul of Beauty, from its urn ascending,
Seems to reach Heaven with link'd lengths of light:
While that clear Shadow to the waves is lending
The Heaven-touch'd glory,—spiritually bright!

Thus, fair Louisa! o'er Life's troublous waters
Such souls as *thine* shed angel-light and peace;
Inspired One! midst the Sun's proud laurell'd daughters,
At *thy* pure glance the unholy tumults cease!

The snow-white Lily, sweetly and serenely,
That Pearl of Earth, may type *thee*, bright and fair!
Thou soft of feeling—though in spirit queenly,—
The worth and whiteness of *thy* soul are there!

Dear Lady of the Pearly Lily! surely
No flower, more meet to grace thy beauty, blows:
Yet *all* we fling thee! Thou, entwining purely
The Poet's Amaranth with the Woman's Rose!

BELVOIR CASTLE.

THE DESTINY OF THE GIFTED.

BY MRS. ABDY.

“ How often have I exclaimed, ‘ I am not beloved as I love.’ ”

MISS LANDON'S *Traits and Trials of Early Life*.

DAUGHTER OF SONG! how truly hast thou spoken,
 Yet deem not that to thee alone belong
 Sad memories of idols crushed and broken,
 Of wounding falsehood, and of bitter wrong;
 Oh! in thy cares, thy trials, I can trace
 The lot appointed for thy gifted race.

Genius is all too lavish of its feelings,
 It gives its tenderness of heavenly birth,
 To waste its bright and beautiful revealings
 On the dull common natures of the earth,
 Casting the flowers of a celestial land
 To droop and wither upon barren sand.

And Earth's cold children cherish not the treasure,
 The pure and blessed offering they repel;
 Busied in worldly toil, or worldly pleasure,
 Their souls respond not to the hidden spell,
 Touched by a hand whose skilful power was given
 As the peculiar boon of favoring Heaven.

And must it then be so—must cold rejection
 Still mock the heart where Genius warmly glows?
 No—there is One on whom its deep affection
 In fearless trusting ardor may repose,
 Exhausting all the riches of its store,
 Yet ever in return receiving more.

Yes—let it safely guard its true devotion
From the low commerce of the worthless sod,
Laying each fond and rapturous emotion
A tribute at the holy shrine of God:
Oh! where can gifted spirits wisely love,
Save when they fix their hopes on One above?

ON A PORTRAIT.

BY MRS. FAIRLIE.

Oh, she is lovely! all too fair
For one of mortal birth:
Her eyes of blue, her waving hair,
An angel might such beauties wear.
Is she of this dull earth?

She looks as though she mourn'd for sin,
Yet knew it but by name;
Her heart, too pure for guile to win
A place, no thought could enter in
That Heaven could view with blame.

Thus pure and sinless loveth she,
And pure and fair she is,
Yet well we know she cannot be
From ev'ry grief and anguish free
In such a world as this.

THE SARRONI.

BY ARTHUR HUME PLUNKETT, ESQ.

ONE day, at the close of such a summer as only shines above the glittering plains and purple hills of Italy, the slanting rays of the sun as they rested on its walls, streamed through the arched and lofty windows of the castle in a yellow gleam into its vaulted chambers, and illumined from floor to roof of rich and graceful fretwork the ancient hall in which the scene of this legend commences. The tapestry which hung from the dark larch wood, with which the lofty walls of this deserted chamber were pannelled, had long since grown faded and discoloured. The cornices, carved in quaint and strange devices, were broken and defaced by the ravages of time. The bat, as at eve it flitted round the roof, was its only tenant, and the echoes of the tessellated pavement, which the slightest whisper could awake, rarely if ever were aroused by the footstep of a human being.

But now, its portals were suddenly thrown open, and the shrill merry laugh and buoyant step of youth disturbed the stillness of that desolate place. The two daughters and only children of the Count Vicente Sarroni, stood for the first time in the hall of their ancestors. One, she was the eldest, Francesca, paused on entering the chamber, and with a chiding gesture hushed the light laughter of the more joyous Ginevra. Then, with a saddened look of mingled pride and reverence, she gazed for some moments in silence on all around her. Proud, to a degree far beyond her years, of the high glories

of her house, it was with no slight pang of bitterness and anger that she thought upon the neglect of its late and present lord, in thus abandoning the chosen spot of all its bygone splendours. Pride of birth and pride of beauty, shone in an aspect of queenlike fearlessness upon her countenance, which was one of a most noble order. With her head slightly raised, displaying the pale features of her face, and the impenetrably deep, bold, and daring expression of her eyes, she mournfully looked upon the scene of former glory, over which time and oblivion, ruin and decay, with sure and certain steps, slowly and silently were drawing the dark veil of ages.

And the other, she the more beautiful, with her golden hair, and her blue and radiant eyes, what words can describe her ineffable loveliness, her aspect of pure and exquisite tenderness, as she clung to her sister's side, with an attitude and an expression such as are only given to a pictured seraph by the painters of her native land!

On the morrow Ginevra was to go to Venice. There, in the charge of a relative in the Grimani family, the next two years of her life were destined to be passed. As it was the last day that she and her sister, who had never been parted for an hour since infancy, were to be together, they wandered over all the haunts of their childhood, and in so doing arrived at the door of the banqueting-hall. Francesca insisted on entering it, to Ginevra's terror, who shared in the superstitious belief of her father's household touching the chamber.

"If I live," said Francesca, "I will hold my bridal banquet here."

"Not here — these gloomy walls — no, we must never revel here."

She shrank closer to Francesca's side, who, heedless of her entreaty, paced slowly up the ruined hall.

An oaken chest, curiously carved and of massive propor-

tions, standing in a recess nearly under the great window at the end of the hall, at this moment attracted Francesca's attention. The sisters approached it.

"Here rest the archives of our house."

"Oh! come away, my own Francesca, come away!" cried Ginevra, seizing Francesca's hand, which was resting on the chest. In so doing, she unawares pressed a secret spring, and the heavy lid suddenly rose on its hinges. They started back; but Francesca instantly comprehending the strange occurrence, drew the terrified Ginevra towards the chest. It was empty.

A trumpet's note echoed from without, and the sound of many voices arose from the battlements below.

"Our father, Francesca!—do you not hear him? Hence—hence, away!"

Francesca and her sister quitted the hall, and as its doors were shut with a loud and hollow noise, it was echoed by the lid of the chest, which fell as though closed by an unseen hand. The flags and banners of battle slowly waved and trembled above the rusted mail and broken spears, and then drooped; and repose, the long, calm, silent, and unbroken repose of years, again reigned in the hall of the Sarroni.

A coronal of fresh and sunny flowers, which had fallen from Ginevra's hand as she hurried from the place, was alone left to tell of the young life and loveliness which had so lately wandered there.

Ginevra went to Venice. A few words will suffice to tell her history there. Guivarra Vercelli, a Milanese nobleman, an exile banished for life from his native states, by order of the Visconti, the reigning Duke of Milan, encountered the daughter of Sarroni in the city of the Doge. They loved, were privately married, and it was not until watching over her infant daughter with all a mother's care and sympathy,

that she was recalled by her father to the castle of the Sarroni.

It was the carnival. Many a lip quivered, and many a fair cheek blanched as the rumour spread through Milan, that Ugo Malapieri, a noble Venetian, had chosen as his bride, the proud, the haughty, and the hated of her sex, Francesca Sarroni. Those who doubted the report, acknowledged the truth of it when some months afterwards, Ginevra, who had now seen nineteen summers, returned from Venice in order to be present at her sister's nuptials.

Guivarra attended his wife, and, habited as a page, contrived to gain her apartment. The wing of the castle in which it was placed was of a more modern construction than the rest, and of easier access from without.

It was early dawn. The stirless beauty of a summer's morning was approaching. Guivarra threw a ladder of ropes over the balcony, and prepared to descend.

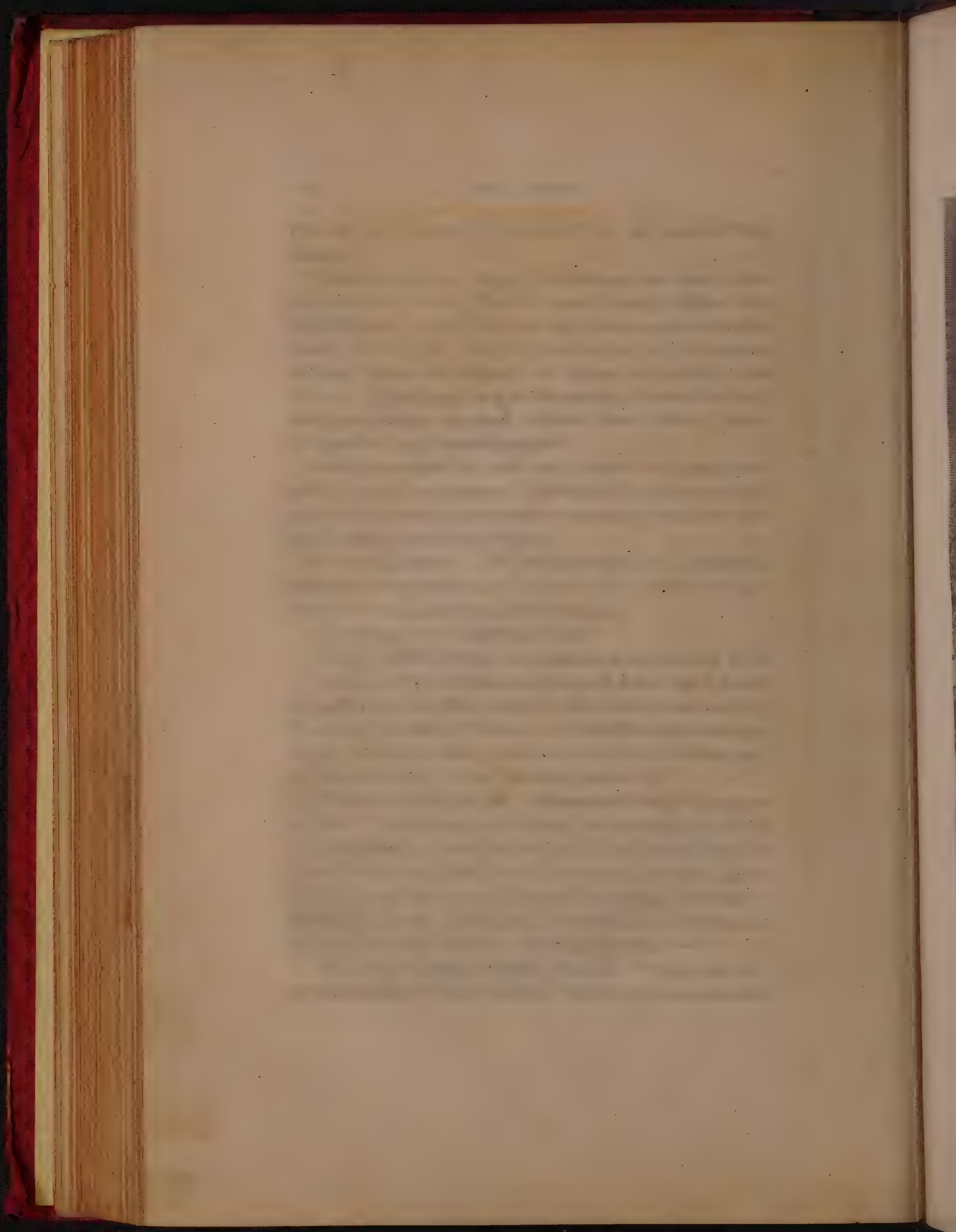
"I must go now—I dare not linger."

"Stay!" cried Ginevra, in a breathless and hurried tone. "I would tell you—there are a thousand things that I would say, and now—my brain is dark. Our child is safe, is well. You'll see her soon in Venice. And should aught go wrong, should my father—Think you were I to kneel at his feet, and declare all—think you that he would pardon us?"

"It were useless, and the consequences would only prove terrible. You will return to Venice, my sweetest, as soon as these nuptials are concluded, and by that time I shall have so prepared all things, that on our announcing our marriage to your father, in the event of his refusal or anger, to fly in safety far from his power. Endeavour to conciliate, to attach him to you while you are with him. Induce your sister——"

"She is so changed," sobbed Ginevra. "Some one approaches—listen!—Away!—away!" she cried, as an attendant







L. Hock

L. Stocke

The Picture



entered the chamber. Guivarra hurried down the ladder, which Ginevra, after disengaging from its fastening, threw to him, in order that he might descend the battlements; then entering the room, she closed the lattice, dismissed the servant, who had come with a request from Francesca to see her, and re-opened the window. She caught the last sound of his horse's feet as it bore him far from her.

The fickle Venetian, the heartless Malapieri, had no sooner beheld Ginevra, than, struck by her excessive beauty, he transferred his affections from the elder to the younger sister, and easily induced the Sarroni to grant his compliance, by offering to increase the wealth and presents which he had promised to bestow on Francesca to an enormous amount to Ginevra, in the event of his obtaining her hand.

The Sarroni was inexorable, and would not hear Ginevra's appeal. Francesca, maddened with jealousy and disappointed pride, refused to see her, and thus Ginevra, who had succeeded in dispatching a messenger to Guivarra at Venice, remained in a state of lonely torture from day to day.

"To-morrow, and Ginevra Sarroni will be the bride of Malapieri. Happy Ginevra!" sighed the envious dames of Milan.

"To-morrow!"—and Francesca wondered that her bursting heart did not break while she spoke the word.

"To-morrow!"—moaned Ginevra. She was alone and in her chamber. Bounding from the couch on which the last few hours had been passed in a state of restless anxiety and inquietude, she threw open the shutters of her lattice.

"Hist—hist!" she cried, "who moves beneath?"

She bent forward. The moon, high in the heavens, shone in a flood of light upon the marble terrace beneath. Her breath came short and fast. Her fingers held back the thick tresses of her golden hair; and, with her lips parted, and her arm raised, pale and statue-like, she listened.

"Hist!" she cried, leaning over the balcony in the vain

endeavour to distinguish a form she imagined to be standing beneath, in the shade of an adjoining buttress. "I am sure that he is there. I saw something move below—now, now it moves again." While speaking, with the rapidity of thought she hastily tore off some of the flowers, which grew in festoons around the window, and twining them together, threw them on the terrace. They fell where the white moonbeams shone brightest. No one approached them.

"He is there! He does not see them—no, they fell so lightly he did not hear them. He will think I am not here, and leave me. Oh, God!"—As this last thought struck her, she disengaged a jewelled bracelet, Ugo Malapieri's bridal gift, from her arm, and flung it with her utmost force to the earth. "He will hear that!" she cried.

The bracelet fell near the flowers, and it shone on the marble in a stream of light, bright as the mirrored image of a silvery star in the dark clear waters of a mountain lake. There they lay, the bracelet and flowers, but none approached them. She turned from the window and sank almost senseless on the couch.

It was about an hour after midnight, when a small body of horsemen, all armed, cautiously approached the castle of the Sarroni. After concealing themselves among the trees that were spread along under the battlements, two of the party dismounted. They were Guivarra Vercelli and a follower of most daring courage, Filippo, whom he had engaged to assist in the attempt to carry off Ginevra. Filippo first ascended the wall leading to the terrace under Ginevra's chamber. Guivarra, after giving directions respecting his infant daughter, who was carried by another of the most trusty of his dependents, prepared to follow him. It was arranged that on returning with Ginevra, whose escape he considered certain, and for whom a fleet horse was prepared, she being a bold and fearless rider, that they were to hasten with all speed towards the Alps,

and so on if possible into France. Filippo was in the act of securing the ladder on the first terrace when a loud shout announced a troop of horse hurrying from the castle. Guivarra, trembling for the safety of his child, arrived on the spot to find two of his followers killed and several wounded. Before he could draw his sword, a heavy blow felled him to the earth. Filippo remained on the terrace until the combatants had separated, and the troop of men-at-arms had returned to the castle. He then descended, and found the place deserted. One of Guivarra's followers, who had been severely wounded, and was dying, in a faint voice called him to his side, and pointing to a thicket at a short distance, showed to him the place in which he had concealed the infant at the commencement of the fray.

Filippo took the child in his arms, and watched at the side of the expiring man till his last breath was gone. The stars were yet in the skies, when, covering the infant with his cloak, he bent his steps in the direction of Venice, the road which he concluded Guivarra and his defeated followers had taken.

The first blush of dawn was on the sky when Ginevra awoke. She had been dreaming of a rapid and successful flight to Venice. She had been there clasping her child to her bosom, with her husband at her side, and now—she arose, a sharp and bitter cry escaped her lips, and she rushed to the window. She gazed and gazed around, but there was no one nigh. She looked beneath. The bracelet and the flowers were both gone.

Music, sweet and distant music, broke upon the morning air. She listened. A chorus of joyous voices sounded near, and the burden of its song was Ginevra's bridal day.

Alone, and attired for the ceremony of her sister's nuptials, Francesca Sarroni, her spirit writhing under the acutest pangs of jealousy and wounded pride, after having wandered from chamber to chamber of her father's lordly dwelling, not knowing whither to turn to avoid the sounds of the joyous

music, or the sight of the groups of guests radiant with beauty, which pressed upon her distracted senses, found herself at the portals of the deserted banquet-hall. If the proud Francesca could with her present feelings care for aught in this world, fraught to her with disappointment, it was that neglected chamber, so associated in her mind with the recollections of the past. The shades of evening were closing in as she entered it.

"Traitor!" she cried, in a voice of bitterness and anguish, as she stood beneath one of the storied windows. "He has deceived me. I never loved him—never! In an ambitious hour I saw him—he wished to call me his. The honors, the fame, the glories of his house, his name—one of the first in Venice—all, all, I coveted them; but no, I loved him not. I, who swore in childhood that I would make my path a glorious one through life—rule my own destinies—to have been outwitted——"

At this moment a figure glided rapidly into the hall. Francesca recoiled in terror. In another instant she recognized in the dim twilight the form of Ginevra.

Covered with jewels, arrayed in her bridal robes, she rushed to the recess under the great window, and touched the spring of the oaken chest. The lid flew open. She bounded in—and in an instant it closed upon her!——

And at that same moment, the spirit of all evil had power in and took possession of the heart of Francesca Sarroni. She advanced a few paces towards the chest, and there stood rooted to the earth.

A cry, a long and stifled cry rose from it, and the tender hands within were wildly and madly beaten against its sides, and then a low choking wail reached her ear—and all was still——Again the echoes of the hall awoke as its portals were loudly closed. Francesca Sarroni had quitted the place.

Twenty years wore away. Magnificently attired in the

gorgeous costume of the period, in a robe of azure velvet, the full folds of which were encircled by a zone of gold, a fillet of pearls confining the bands of her dark hair, Francesca, more queenlike than ever, though in her fortieth year, was seated on the terrace of the Sarroni Castle, while at her side stood, his eyes beaming on her with heartfelt devotion, and his soul wrapped in the admiration which her charms drew from him, a Venetian nobleman, his plumed and jewelled cap in his hand, bowing gracefully, as Francesca, with radiant glance and beating heart, permitted him to press her snow-white hand to his lips.

Twenty years had made some changes in the family of the Sarroni. Although the Sforza ruled in Milan, and the Visconti were no longer lords thereof, yet was their power and state as unlimited as ever. The sudden disappearance of Ginevra on her bridal day had been accounted for immediately afterwards, by the report, arising from some portion of her dress having been found on the banks of the lake, that she had drowned herself. The first tidings her wounded husband obtained of her, as he lay exhausted with pain in the wretched hut to which he had been conveyed by his followers, on the night of the attempted rescue, were those of her death. In addition to this stunning intelligence, was the extraordinary disappearance of his child, of whom, and of the attendant (Filippo) who had borne her off, he could learn absolutely nothing. This man, a Venetian of the lowest class, and of a desperate character, was employed in the dangerous expedition Guivarra had so uselessly embarked in, on account of his determined and daring character. Every attempt to discover whither the infant had been carried proved useless. That Filippo had escaped with her was certain, and no more.

For some weeks he lingered in the neighbourhood, wandering over every scene of which he had heard Ginevra speak, and gazing on places which had once been familiar to and

loved by her. Often at night did he pause beneath the windows of the castle, and look upon her deserted and desolate chamber. He even climbed its lofty terraces, and watched the moonlight beaming upon the windows of the ancient hall, whose walls had witnessed such a dreadful scene. But time passed on, and wrought its healing influence on his broken spirit. His mind and body regained their wonted health, and his soul sighed for distant objects. He betook himself to Venice, and entered into the service of the Republic.

The Count Vicente Sarroni shut himself up on hearing of his child's untimely end, overcome with remorse by his conduct. Within two years, he received a fresh shock in the marriage of Francesca Sarroni with a Venetian nobleman of a rank far inferior to the high and distinguished house of the Sarroni. Banishing her from his presence, he refused to forgive, or ever to behold her again; and although the proud Francesca made to him a most humiliating application on the death of her husband, which occurred about a year and a half after their marriage, to present herself and her infant son to him, Sarroni remained inexorable. Twenty years had thus gone by; Francesca and her son living in comparative poverty, retirement, and loneliness, in the states of Venice, while Vicente Sarroni, half-witted and querulous, refused to give them admittance to the castle in which he resided, surrounded by a few attendants. At length he died, and the story of the Sarroni is resumed at the period when Francesca, accompanied by her son the Count Leone Vercello, enters into possession of the castle of her forefathers.

Francesca and the stranger were watching the sunset from the terrace of the castle.

"Methought, Sir Knight, honor and love, and the oath that you swore so fervently a few weeks since in Venice, had escaped your memory. You were to follow to our castle without loss of time, and have we not been here, Leone and I,

from day to day counting in vain on your arrival. Our neighbour nobles have been insisting on the right of friendship to gain admittance here, but I would not see them. How could I task my heart to seem glad or gay when it was not so?"

Francesca raised her eyes, and perceived the Venetian's gaze intently fixed upon a window in the tower, at the base of which they were seated. For a moment her lip lost its red, and the hue on her cheek grew pale, but recovering herself, she continued—

"That was my sister's chamber; hers of whose melancholy fate you have heard me speak."

The words did not reach his ear. A pause ensued; while her companion, lost in thought, still watched the window in the tower.

"She was very beautiful," sighed Francesca.

"Oh! she was beautiful, wondrously beautiful!" burst in an uncontrolled exclamation from his lips. Perceiving her look of astonishment, he added in a composed and tranquil tone, "I saw her once at Milan years ago—Milan or Venice, I know not which."

They rose. Pursuing their way, an angle in the terrace brought them in view of the windows of the old banqueting-hall.

"Let us return. I hear Leone's voice. He is seeking us."

"Welcome, Count Guivarra—ever welcome!" shouted the youthful Leone, as he joined them. It was even so. The once exiled Milanese was now the proud and brave Venetian soldier—the once happy husband of Ginevra was now the crafty and ambitious suitor of the vain and wealthy Francesca.

And when did twenty years with all their changes ever yet pass by and leave the heart of man unhardened or unscathed? Time had but dealt with Guivarra Vercelli as with other men, and he was changed. Ambition had usurped the throne of Love.

Some months had elapsed since her return to the castle, when one morning a paper was put into Francesca's hands. She read it. It bore no signature, but its purport was enough. Vague suspicion was now absolute torture. With a quivering lip and an angry brow, she cried—

"Where is the Count Leone? Tell him I would see him. Now—here—instantly."

"My lord is absent."

"Let him be sought. Acquaint the Count Guivarra I await him here."

On the marble steps of an ancient fountain, in a majestic grove on a mountain's side, and at about a league's distance from the castle, the truant Leone lay at the feet of a fair and exquisitely beautiful girl.

"What a splendid dagger, Leone! how its hilt flashes in the sun."

"Wilt have it?" he cried; "'twill grace thy slender waist."

"Beware of how you make me such a gift, young sir, or I may use it as you will not like."

"'Tis thine, and use it as thou wilt."

Seizing the brilliant toy, she drew the steel from the sheath, and with a playful show of violence severed with it one of the long black locks of Leone's raven hair. "I need no further service from it;—take back thy gift." Replacing it in the sheath, she cried, in an accent of wonder—"Ah me! what are these marks?"

"They are the arms of the Malapieri family. This dagger once belonged to one of them, who was a doge of Venice, many, many years ago. Fairest, you have heard of Venice?"

"No, never."

"'Tis a city built in the sea. There are long canals, and bridges, and great palaces, and the doge is lord of it."

"Long canals—dark boats—Oh! Leone, tell me, tell me more of Venice—I often dream——"

"What ails thee, sweetest? Come nearer to the fountain, and we will talk of Venice. There is a bridge, a great bridge there, the famous Rialto——"

"A dark bridge, one mighty arch—I dreamed of it last night. More of Venice."

Leone started back in astonishment at the eagerness with which the girl repeated her demand. Her small hands were pressed upon her brows, and her life seemed to hang upon his words.

"I know but little of Venice," he said, "for when there we seldom quitted the old and gloomy palace of my mother. Beyond the place of St. Mark I rarely ventured. 'Tis a noble place. The ducal palace, and the campanile, and the two columns, and the sea, often when at noon the sun pours his full flood of radiance——"

"No, not at noon—it was dark. There were two pillars, and the dark sea beyond, and a crowd of people near, when I was hurried past."

"Sweetest! what are you speaking of?"

"Ah!" cried the girl, starting, as if shaking off some painful vision. "It is no dream. I have been in Venice, but when I know not. Look at this bracelet, Leone; your dagger called it to my mind."

As she spoke she drew from her bosom a bracelet of gold, from which the stones that had evidently once thickly covered it, had been all removed by a rather careless hand. The chasing was defaced and broken in several places. "I remember this bracelet, Leone, as long as I can remember any thing. When I first saw it—I was a mere child then—it was covered with diamonds and jewels of all colors. Old Filippo used often to show it to me, and wave it before my dazzled eyes when I wept. But he was poor, and the stones were of great value, and he broke them out one by one, and so they went.

He would never part with this; and the sad night he died, when I had forgotten all about it, he gave it to me, and told me—It matters not. The figures on your dagger are like these.”

Leone took the bracelet. Within the clasp were the arms of the Malapieri and of the Sarroni combined.

“This bracelet,—tell me,” she cried, “all you know of its history——”

“My wedded wife ere sets to-morrow’s sun!” whispered Leone to his lovely companion, as leaving her for a few moments in a place of safety in the castle, to which he had borne her, he hastened to attend his mother’s bidding.

There is no space sufficient here to tell the scene of altercation which ensued between the proud and enraged Francesca and her wild and impassioned son. He poured forth all his love for the strange peasant girl at her feet—declared his solemn intention of making her his bride—and entreated her, by all their past years of fellowship in care and woe, to grant her consent. She was inexorable; and ultimately, on hearing the words escape his lips that he had brought the girl to the castle, quitted the chamber. On attempting to follow her, he found himself a close prisoner.

Terrified as he felt for the peasant girl’s safety, his fears were few to what they might have been had he known the desperate intention of his mother. As it was, he consoled himself with the thought that he should be able to effect his escape before they could discover where she was concealed.

It was nearly midnight when Francesca, in order to avoid attracting the attention of any of the domestics in crossing the castle publicly, entered a chamber next to the one which she had occupied since her return. Its walls were wainscoted with oak. With the aid of her lamp she soon discovered the spring of a secret pannel, touching which, a masked door flew

back. Closing it after her, she entered a narrow and dark passage, through which she passed, and descending by a flight of steps into an ancient crypt, the walls of which were green with damp, and thickly covered with unwholesome dews. Cautiously finding her way over the broken pavement, her progress was interrupted by an old and time-worn door. This easily yielded to her hand, and she found herself standing beneath the lofty arch of a spacious vault. Massy iron gates obstructed her path. She raised the lamp. It was the tomb-house of her race! The bold and daring Francesca gazed upon the graves of her fathers, until their shrouded shadows seemed to advance from the darkness, and to beckon her among them.

Turning in sickly horror from the gate, a fresh terror awaited her. She beheld, at the further end of the narrow aisle through which she had so lately passed, a figure wrapped in long garments, with crossed arms and bowed head, awaiting her approach. A moonbeam shining through a narrow aperture at the roof of the crypt sufficiently dispelled the gloom and obscurity around her to render it distinctly visible. She shrunk back in fear, as a cloud, concealing the moon, left the crypt in total darkness. For some moments she remained silent in the vault, then shaking off the painful feeling which oppressed her, resolutely advanced into the crypt. The lamp threw but little light around, and fear was again overcoming her, when the moonlight broke in at the high and narrow window, and Francesca smiled at her fears as she recognized a statue of the Virgin, which convinced her that the place had once been a chapel. Availing herself of the moonlight while it lasted, she observed that there was a passage, which had hitherto been concealed from her by the broad shafts of one of the pillars of the aisles. She passed along it without interruption until she arrived at a door at the foot of a flight of steps, which appeared to lead to some aperture conducting to the battlements. She

had again taken the wrong passage. She was once more about to return to the crypt, when she perceived a glove lying on the steps at her feet. She seized it. Richly embroidered, she recognized it as Leone's. She hurried forward. Something got entangled in her dress; it was an old and broken bracelet. She examined it by the lamp. An involuntary cry escaped her lips. The figures, the cyphers, the device, though mutilated, she knew them all. Wonderful God! it was the bracelet which Ugo Malapieri had placed upon her sister's arm. Well did she recollect the evening when it had been shown to her. Retaining it in her grasp, she ascended the stairs, bewildered and chilled with horror. A torn veil in one of the narrow openings in the tower recalled her to herself, and to the object of her search. She was standing before a low archway leading to a door, which was open, but the view through which was obscured by hangings of tapestry. She paused—a faint sigh sounded near. She stepped forward and raised the tapestry—a gust of wind extinguished her lamp—all was darkness, utter darkness!

From the cold air she concluded that she was in a chamber of some extent. Suddenly the moonbeams flashed through a range of lofty windows above her, and the many banners, the shields, the spears, the helmets, the armour, and the tapestry, all, all in one glance of agony, revealed to her the terrible place into which retributive fate appeared to have led her unwilling footsteps—the deserted banqueting-hall!

She turned to the recess in which the chest was standing—an irresistible power seemed to force her towards it. The moon shone as distinct as day around her. In a fit of desperation she suddenly raised her head. She was standing beside the chest, and close to her—upon it—lay slumbering—her brow, as of old, concealed by locks of sunny hair, as bright, her sleeping smile as sparkling, and the same tender flush still on her cheek—the warm, the living, the beautiful Ginevra!

Francesca pressed her burning brow. Her senses were deserting her, but still she knew it was no delusion.

In a whisper, scarcely human, she exclaimed—"Ginevra!"

"I am here!" answered the sleeper, as she rose from the chest, and approached Francesca.

With a wild and piercing shriek, and her hands tossed madly in the air, Francesca staggered back, and fell senseless to the earth.

The portals at the lower end of the hall were thrown open at this moment, and Leone, who had effected his escape, accompanied by Count Guivarra, and a host of attendants with torches, hurried into the chamber.

"Ginevra!" he cried, and the peasant girl rushed to his arms. He bore her from the hall. The words recalled Francesca to her senses. Starting from the ground, she shrieked—

"The spring!—but touch the secret spring, and she is safe. Do you not hear her struggles? Release her. Will no one touch the spring? Guivarra, Count Guivarra, save my sister! Oh! save Ginevra!"

In an instant Guivarra knelt at her side. The words that had escaped her lips—their import? Could it be——

But she was convulsed, her lips compressed, and the fierce conflict of life and death was raging high. At length her gasping and her throes grew fainter, and she looked around.

"The chest!—Ginevra!"

Guivarra rushed to the recess. The tapestry was torn aside. The chest was there. In a second it was burst open, and its contents were revealed.

* * * * *

When the horror-stricken Guivarra, agonized and pale, turned from the dreadful sight to rend its terrible history from Francesca, her spirit had fled for ever!

OTTERBOURNE.

A BALLAD.

BY MRS. MABERLY.

“To horse! to horse!” Lord Percy cried,
“And quick brace on your armour gleaming,
My merry men; on yon hill side
I see the Douglas’ banner streaming;
And many a Scottish wife shall mourn
Her husband’s fate at Otterbourne.”

Then loud o’er hill and glen remote
The brazen trumpet’s clang resounded;
And as he caught the well-known note
Each trembling war-horse proudly bounded:
For well he knew no hunter’s horn
Waken’d thy echoes, Otterbourne.

And now the charging squadrons meet,
Their falchions in the moonbeams glancing;
And swiftly flew the arrowy sleet,
Midst plumes and pennons gaily dancing;
And many a knight, with corslet torn,
Bow’d his proud crest at Otterbourne.

’Tis o’er!—the chief who oft has led
The battle-tide lies in his glory:
The lowly mound that marks his bed
Too plainly tells the fatal story.
The house of Douglas long shall mourn
The bloody field of Otterbourne.

A DREAM.

BY THE HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY, M.P.

SLEEP had assumed her wonted pow'r,
As on my couch I lay;
The church-bell struck the midnight hour,
And softly died away.
Although my eyes were closed, my mind
Refused to be at rest,
And dreams at first all undefined
My waking soul oppress'd.
Soon a low murmur sweetly came,
A sound of time gone by,
The whisper seemed to breathe my name
In strange reality.
The laughing hours of early years,
With all their wayward hopes and fears,
The throb—the impulse scarce repress'd—
The smile—the kiss that spoke the rest,
Came crowding fast upon my brain,
And made the act of sleeping vain,
Save as a Heav'nly bless'd relief,
To soothe my yearning breast of grief.

As thus I lay a gentle sigh
Came softly to mine ear,
And—where the moonbeam from on high,
In floods of silver clear,

Fell from my window, in my sight—
Thus spangled by the queen of night—
 A form was standing near.
It moved—and pass'd so gently nigh,
The movement scarce might meet the eye,
 So airily it came ;
Alas ! in life that foot was mute—
It was but still the same.

Approaching near that form reclined
 Upon my couch below,
I even saw the midnight wind
 Each tress move to and fro :
If 'twas a dream, 'twas strangely plain,
And would that it were here again.
So fairly were her features told
That e'en the glittering braid of gold
Which bound her locks of glossy hue
Was there confess'd, distinct, and true.
'Twas no deceit ! there ne'er has been
A vision more devoutly seen,
Or keenly felt, for on my lids—
 The tear that starts not to a lie—
That only falls when rapture bids
 The heart forego its misery,
Was trembling still, and on my couch
Were signs as of some recent touch ;
Though lightly press'd—'twas plainly seen
A hand upon my bed had been !
In kneeling down a prayer to say
I kiss'd the sign—it pass'd away,
Like each devoted act of mine,
My faith was ruin to the shrine !

Oh! strange—that lips so fraught with love
Should still the curse upon them prove,
And that they need but softly sigh,
To bid the sweetest flow'ret die;
Or dwell upon the fairest face
To mar—of joy the resting place,
Although the heart within would give
Its last—best drop—that each should live.

NIGHT AT SEA.

BY FLORENCE WILSON.

DARKNESS is on the deep!
The Spirit of the Storm with brooding wings
A pall-like canopy o'er ocean flings,
While the lone seaman doth his vigil keep.

Silence is on the wave!
Save where it swells against the vessel's side,
As on her steady course the bark doth glide
Like mortals, wending onward to—the grave.

Light glimmers o'er the deep!
And the pale stars look from the arch of Heav'n
Like angels' eyes, to whom the task is giv'n
O'er slumbering Earth, an unseen watch to keep.

And now the vestal moon
Chases the darkness and the dread away,
And with her silver beam and trembling ray,
Makes bright the midnight skies of balmy June.

“THE BLESSING OF THE SEA.”

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

Elle était de ce monde, ou les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin ;
Et, rose, elle a vécu que vivent les roses
L'espace d'un matin.

MALHERBE.

THE commerce of Boulogne, where the scene of this *hisiorette* is laid, has been gradually augmenting for some years, and is still daily acquiring greater activity. Not only may the observer of its harbour notice vessels laden with wines and fruits from Bordeaux, and various parts of the south of France, others with timber from Norway, flax and hemp from Russia, salt from St. Ubes, a sea-port of Portugal, coals and wool from England, and slates from the principality of Wales. At certain times others will meet the view, fitting out for the cod fishery of Newfoundland.

Such enterprises, so long neglected by the people on this part of the coast, are working many and great changes on their character and habits. There is, however, a large class existing, as if they were a distinct community, amidst the surrounding population. We allude to the fishermen, who in their costume, manners, domestic circumstances, and language, have remained almost stationary. Intercourse with foreigners, so effective on others, is with them much more restricted, while their absorption in maritime occupations greatly contributes to the sameness of their character. Endowed with

amazing strength, and the most intrepid courage, they reserve their energies for the sea, and brave all its perils; but when they quit their fishing-boats they appear to resign themselves to repose, until roused to resume their toils.

Since the revolution of 1830, the law forbids all public processions in the streets of those towns in which there are protestant chapels. One, however, is still tolerated in Boulogne, on the first Sunday in October. It is that accompanied by a service called "*The Blessing of the Sea*," to which the fishermen attach great importance, prior to the commencement of the herring fishery. In July, also, their wives and daughters, attired in white, are preceded by a platform adorned with garlands and flowers, on which are placed two large cakes, which are borne to the church, where multitudes assemble. These cakes having been blessed by the priests, are cut in pieces for general participation; and after the celebration of the mass, with a special reference to those who "go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters," the remainder of the day is passed in gaiety and mirth.

In the small fishing village of Ambleteuse, in the neighbourhood of Boulogne, lived a peasant, Francois Gerval by name, whose only wealth consisted in those mental possessions which dignify even poverty. By the integrity of his heart, and the honesty of his principles, he had acquired the esteem of all his neighbours. By indefatigable industry he gained an honest livelihood.

His hours of leisure were devoted to his only child, Madeleine, who now had attained the age of seventeen. She was lovely in her form, gentle and obliging in her manners, and strictly virtuous in her principles. Their cottage was the scene of rustic peace.

The evening of the 9th of July, 183—, was one of extreme loveliness. The sea was smooth as a looking-glass, without

a ripple upon its surface. Stillness reigned in every thing around. Many a galley slept on the tide, the sails clinging lazily to their masts.

The sun, one unclouded blaze of living light, disappearing in the glowing waters, threw a long column of golden light across the wide surface of the sea, and imparted a richness of colouring not to be described.

It was the evening preceding the fête we have before alluded to, and Madelaine, accompanied by her affianced husband, Jules Dumoulin, wandered on the distant sand, indulging in dreams never to be realized. Alas! how different are the realities of life from its hopes. As Jules pressed in silence the beloved arm that was resting on his own, how little did he imagine the events that a few hours would bring about. It was near ten o'clock when they parted; there was not a cloud in the heavens, nor a vapour upon earth; there was not so much as a ripple to break the moonbeam that was sleeping on the water. A few dark sails hung motionless on the surface, soliciting the breeze in vain. Madelaine appeared sad and dejected—an awful presentiment had taken possession of her mind; this sad foreboding she had imparted to Jules's sister, her confidential friend, "Ere two moons have waned we shall cease to exist." Alas! how truly, how sadly, was it verified!

The morning of the fête, the 10th July, grew apace; the fishermen came forth to their honest labours. How anxiously Madelaine awaited Jules's arrival we will not attempt to describe. Nine o'clock struck, and still he came not. A crowd had assembled in the little market place; Madelaine rushed from her father's cottage. The first words that struck her ears were, "poor, ill-fated Jules." A fearful shriek burst from her—"Where, where is he?" No one uttered a word, or moved a step. It was a terrible suspense. At this moment two men appeared carrying a lowly bier;—Madelaine gazed

for an instant, and saw the mangled body of her beloved Jules. The cause of the awful tragedy was soon told. Dumoulin, on leaving his betrothed, had missed his way, and his foot slipping, had been precipitated from the rocks. Poor Madelaine lingered on in miserable existence for a month. On the ninth of August, at the very hour in which the fatal presentiment had warned her of her end, she felt her approaching death; she uttered a fervent prayer for the soul of Jules, her sighs became thick and suffocating, then lighter and more faint—and Madelaine was a corpse!

In a few days her body was consigned to the same grave that held that of her affianced. Before the awful ceremony was ended, and while the solemn dirge for the dead was chanting, the mourners fell back, forming on each side an opening, through which a group of village maidens advanced with baskets of flowers, which they strewed in profusion over the grave. One, who was distinguished from her companions by a superior elegance of mien and grace of feature, after placing the contents of her basket, bent over the grave, and raising her tearful eyes to Heaven, breathed a silent prayer for the souls of Madelaine and Jules.

Poor Madelaine left no name to transmit to posterity, her memory lives alone in the hearts of her disconsolate parents. On a simple stone, the lines of Malherbe, which we have given as a motto to "adorn our tale," alone mark her grave.

JULIA.

BY B. SIMMONS, ESQ.

I.

PROUD the palazzo was—a fit abode
 The constant music of bright feet to win;
 Blue the Italian heaven above it glowed—
 Italian painting shed its heaven within;
 On the warm halls cold tempering grace was thrown
 Where watching gods stood round in breathing stone;
 And mid green gardens founts, in silver gushing,
 Moaned to the breeze through myrtle thickets rushing.

II.

And JULIA sat at evening's mellow hour
 Beneath its bright but melancholy star,
 Where the acacias of her latticed bower
 Flung their light shadows o'er the lake afar.
 Alone she sat,—all heavily the tender
 Droop of her eyes concealed their glances splendour;
 Well might the volume at her feet explain
 That Petrarch wooed her weary ear in vain.

III.

What sound can thus her greyhound rouse?
 Whose footstep breaks the lulling air?
 Who crashes through the cedar boughs?
 Who bursts upon the muser there?—

O! none need ask with eyes to see
That youth's wild look of fervency,
Who, dashing from his eager brow
The cap and plume his face concealing,
And flinging wide his mantle—now
Before that frightened fair is kneeling!
O! none need ask who haps to hear
His tones—that dark-eyed cavalier!

IV.

“The war—the war—Beloved!—the war,
That kept my soul from thee,
Has ceased!—the crescent's dwindled star
Is dim—and Greece is free!
From Navarino's waves we turned
Our barks in triumph home;—
How many a tedious year I've yearned
For this glad hour—'tis come!

“Here, in this blest, bright lonely spot,
Where last our looks were parted
In agony—but 'tis forgot—
We meet, the faithful-hearted!
I bring the wealth for which thy sire
Bade me go seek the main,—
In God's own face I now require
My promised Bride again!

“But I am wild—why droop those eyes,
Whose deep delicious ray
So often here made night's sweet dyes
Diviner far than day?

Ay—there—that glorious glance has given
 My pulse the thrill it knew
 In long-lost hours—by yonder Heaven!
 Thou'rt truest of the true!"

V.

If the chill marble nymph, that lay reposing
 Among the statues of that radiant place,
 Leaped to its feet—its vacant eyes unclosing—
 And looked that fiery Lover in the face,
 Such look had more of life and less of death
 Than hers, who slowly—with long, in-drawn breath
 Arising, pass'd her hand before her eyes,
 And with one killing shriek cleft the blue summer-skies!

VI.

"*Mother, my mother!*" a far silvery tone
 Of pain and sweetness through the alleys spoke,
 And with an angel's shining hair, anon
 A child, all wildly to their presence broke.
 Swift, clear, and beautiful as mountain stream
 That shoots through dusk woods in a sudden gleam,—
 A fairy girl—who at that Ladye's knee
 Cried with clasped hands, "*Mother, what aileth thee?*"

VII.

At once to bosom and to brow flew back
 The blood that, choking, ebb'd upon her heart,
 And with a voice that through life's dreary track
 Will haunt his ears, that mourner said—"Depart—
 Depart!"—and Duty for awhile grew strong,
 But the chord snaps when over-strained too long,



W. H. M. and

in 1830

“This child—this child—” she shrieked, “will tell it all!”
And fell to earth as smitten Dove may fall!

* * * * *

VIII.

What need of words?—In Transatlantic strife
(Where the red Indian with Columbia copes)
Alberto early staked his desperate life,
And lost it later little than his hopes.
Nor long did Julia linger; though awhile
She bore her lot with the calm mournful smile
The Painter gave her in yon picture, where
She sits all sad with beauty-braided hair,
And clasps her joyous child, and looks a thing
For lovely eyes to mourn, and sorrowing bards to sing!

MAHAMMED'S LAMENTATION FOR HIS MOTHER,
WHO DIED A PAGAN.

BY MILES STAPLETON, ESQ.

THY grave's in Yamāma—unhallow'd the tomb—
Forbidden the shrine to the child of thy womb—
I may weep o'er thy loss, but the God I obey
For an infidel parent forbids me to pray.

O! wild is my grief, as the blast of the north
When the desert's convulsed by the breath of his wrath,
And the caravan sinks in the sand, as when roll'd
O'er the chariots of Egypt the waters of old.

Let my sorrow be wild as the pilgrims' despair,
When, dying with toil, they behold in the air
The vulture impatiently hovering low,
And watching his victims as fainter they grow.

All vain is my sorrow—all vain my despair—
The name of Amīnah's forbidden my prayer.
Let my heart break in silence, my brain melt to tears,
In the waste of Yamāma no fountain appears.

The faithful shall meet in the heavens above
The hearts which on earth they most tenderly love:
In the cave on Mount Hara, more bright than a star
In the darkness of night shone my own Khadijāh.*

She is dead—she is gone!—but there still is a joy,
A faith in our meeting, death cannot destroy;
I may weep for her loss—on the tears that I shed
A rainbow of hope by the Koran is spread.

But o'er thee, who wert nearest and dearest of all,
By the sin of the Koreish† the Araf‡ shall fall—
Eternal that veil, and eternal the night,
Which shall shroud thee from Heaven, and bar thee my
sight.

* Mahammed's favorite wife and first convert. He revealed to her his mission in a cave on Mount Hara.

† The tribe of Koreish persecuted the Prophet.

‡ The veil which separates the damn'd from the blest.



LADY IDA'S TRYST.

BY JOHN R. CHORLEY, ESQ.

“LIST! I will wait beneath the linden-tree:
 The moon will rise at midnight—in thy home
 Thy lord will slumber, and thy lip be free
 To sigh a last farewell! Sweet Ida! come,—
 Thou wilt! I cannot yet be dead to thee:
 Thou canst not sleep, and let the past entomb
 Our love, while I awake and wander there,
 The only mourner of a dream so fair!”

The organ drowned the sacring bell,
 The chaunt was loud and clear,
 And low the whispered accents fell
 On the kneeling lady's ear.
 Her breath grew quick, her cheek did glow;
 She answered nought, nor stirred,—
 But on her heart, like fire on snow,
 Sank every murmured word.

When the moon waked the midnight airs, and cast
 Slant shadows o'er the dew, and all around,
 Save her quick-beating heart, was still—she passed
 Forth from her chamber, trembling lest a sound
 Should rouse her sleeping lord:—and thrice aghast,
 Paused on the threshold; for the Baron's hound
 Yelled at the door, and rustling at her side,
 Through the dim hall a shadow seemed to glide.

“And thus we part, beneath the shade
That heard our earliest vow;
For thou hast sold thy heart, and made
Of mine a ruin now!
Yet welcome still! an hour like this
No vain reproach shall grieve;
And in my arms, with one fond kiss,
My love's last breath receive!”

She raised her eyes to his: she could not brook
Their piercing gaze, as o'er her senses stole
The well-known voice, the sad, beseeching look;
And love long stifled, spurning faint control,—
She met his clasp, and every thought forsook,
Save one sweet passion, her enraptured soul,
As breathless in his strong embrace she lay:—
He kissed her once—she cried, and swooned away!

The lover held her to his heart
Till her's had ceased to beat;
And closed her eyes, and said—“We part
Mine own! again to meet.
I lay thee by the linden-tree
To take thy rest awhile,
To-morrow thou wilt sleep with me—
Beneath the minster aisle!”

THE PASHA'S FATHER.

BY SIR GARDNER WILKINSON, AUTHOR OF "MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE
ANCIENT EGYPTIANS," ETC.

THE quiet night of the Egyptian capital had passed, and the cool morn had ushered in the busy day; the moezzen's harmonious cry from each lofty minaret had called the faithful to their prayers, and the *hánefee* had long since performed his early devotions. The slow-paced water-camel, with its tinkling bell, was pacing through the streets of Cairo, and the criers of new henneh and old soap were beginning their accustomed course, when on a sudden the cannon of the citadel announced an event of more than ordinary importance.

"What's the news!" exclaimed the wife of the porter of the *sukeréeh*, (for every quarter of the city is closed by a gate): "the knowledge of all things is with God," replied Ahmed, as he passed his hand over his beard; "probably a young bey is born, or the long-talked-of arrival of the Pasha's father is announced; if so, the people will have a general distribution of corn, and I shall receive a new dress."

"*Yoo, ya eynee!*"* said his aged sister, "how came you to fancy such a thing? Did you think the Jew was dead?† And do you suppose that the arrival of a hungry Turk, still more hungry than his son, will confer on us any benefit? These people live upon us; the government of Osmanlis is like the government of fish—the large ones eat the small fry. Will the Pasha's father be satisfied with *Doora* bread, or will he——

* *Ya eynee*, "my eye," a term of endearment.

† A whimsical expression, applied to any thing improbable.

but here comes Hassan, the barber, who will tell us all the news."

"My salutations to you—good morning. What a commotion in the place; all Cairo has risen to day with the eyes of astonishment, eager to put on the spectacles of curiosity; and I scarcely had time to repeat two *rehahs* for the prophet, before the whole house was turned inside out: only look at the people coming through the gate, *ya salám oo sellem!* like ants. There are the cannon again! how the race of Turks and Memlooks delight in noise. I believe when their fathers and mothers were burnt they turned into gunpowder to infest the world after their death; a perverse race, never satisfied with what Allah has done for them, who either shave their beards, or change their colour by dyeing them black, if God makes them of any other hue."

"*Ya eynee*, you are always abusing the *gindees*," * interrupted the porter's young wife, "and yet you have more reason to thank that face than any other, as the encourager of the trade."

"And you defend them because they maintain the pillar of the religion."

"A pillar on your beard!—go to, man!—no more nonsense, and only let us know what all this is about."

"What! do you not know that the Pasha's father has arrived? Where can you have slept not to have discovered this?—he is already at Boolak, and all the *sokolagasi*, and the *ichagasi*, † and the *topgees*, and the *topekgees*, ‡ and all the trades, and all who have or who have not any business there, are gone to meet him, and a grand procession is to take place from the Nile to the citadel."

* A name applied to the Turks and Memlooks, meaning soldier.

† The bearded, and other household troops.

‡ The gunners and musqueteers.

Never were the streets so thronged with people; women shrieked, children cried, and men shouted "take care," as they trod upon their naked feet, while pressing through the gate of the quarter; and the dense mass, varied with every colour which Eastern costume gives, hurried on towards the Square of the Usbekeeh, through which the *cortège* was to pass; while the more curious and less prudent continued their anxious course to the Boolak road.

Safe from the pressure of the crowd, within the gateway, stood a water-carrier, calling "refreshment to the thirsty;" and here and there a high-saddled ass, the hackney-coach of Cairo, appeared in the street, patiently waiting for any whose indulgent husbands granted them permission to visit the ceremony.

"Here," said Zayneb, the porter's wife, to a driver, whose saddle presented the most brilliant carpet, "wait till I have put on my *tob* and *abbara*," * and in a few moments having returned, and mounted the elevated seat, she proceeded down the street, with her robe inflated like a balloon, which seemed to threaten to carry up the animal, as well as the rider.

"*Riglak, shemálak, gémbak, dahrak, óä, hauh, tghlkeh!*" cried the driver, warning the crowd, as he urged the flinching beast through the thronged street, to the evident discomfiture of the pedestrians. The word *riglak* had not been uttered before the ass's foot trod on *that* of a too slowly warned neighbour; *shemálak* was accompanied by a blow on the *left side* by the hard saddle; *gémbak* was only uttered to announce the simultaneous blow of the stirrup on the *side* of an incautious female; and the rider's foot gave a practical illustration and interpretation of *dahrak* on another's *back*. Some exclaimed at the driver, some asked if the lady was in a hurry to meet her

* Two silk full robes, the outer one black, when worn by married women, which are put over their dress on going out.

husband, while others profited by the opening thus made through the crowd to follow in their wake.

All went on well, and much satisfaction was anticipated on their arrival at the Boolak road. Zayneb had pictured to herself the splendor of the procession; she had conjured up in her mind the appearance of the Pasha's father, and had already fancied the pleasure she should have in relating all the brilliant sights she was to behold, when a camel, laden with straw, having become restive by the blows it received from the passing crowd, precipitated her into a treacle shop, to the evident discomfiture of numerous flies and wasps. The heedless camel passed on, totally unconscious of the accident it had caused; the two drivers, instead of assisting the helpless Zayneb, enveloped in her cumbrous dress, commenced a tirade of abuse, which ended in blows; the shopman and the wasps vented their rage on the immediate cause of their displeasure, whilst the crowd pushed forward in quest of the spectacle they sought, with the consolatory observation, "two legs are safer than four."

The stream of human beings flowed onwards, and the dust rising from the Boolak road, the galloping of Memlooks, who displayed their skill with the *géreet*, and the slow march of cavalry and infantry, announced the approach of the illustrious stranger.

Before him rode the *salám agási*, whose office was to salute those whom he passed to the right and left, a band of Turkish music greeted him as he reached the bridge, and salvos of artillery, scarcely exceeding in noise the trumpets and kettle-drums, vied by its smoke with the clouds of dust in which the *cortège* was enveloped. Another park of guns saluted the Pasha's father at the forts of Cairo; but an accident excited a more than ordinary number of Turkish exclamations. A cannon had been discharged with ball, which had passed

through the rear of the procession, killing a mule laden with cases of sweetmeats, and scattering the contents upon the road. "Blessings spring from misfortunes!" exclaimed some hungry peasants, as they scrambled for the fragments; "death is from Allah, sweetmeats from Constantinople!"

To discover the delinquent gunner was no easy matter; the piece had remained loaded after ball practice three days before, and since the *Topgi Bashî* agreed that no one could see the inside, and that the result alone proved it to be a fact, it was thought better not to institute an inquiry which could never be satisfied, and as no one was killed, so no one required punishment; and to make much of nothing, was to show want of respect to the present important occasion.

"A bad omen," said Hafiz Aga, as he twisted his moustaches; "you will see that discord will arise out of some of the eatables; it is the first time a cannon ball came in contact with a box of sweetmeats since the days of our Lord Solomon, to whom be praise and peace! I tell you, Shekh Mustapha, by the life of your beard, this is a black day; there is a poor fellow who has lost his eye by a *geréet*—may misfortune be far from you—something more will happen before the sun has set."

These and many other remarks passed from the spectators; the crowd pushed on as the procession moved forward; and the Pasha's father having arrived at the citadel, was received by the military chiefs, the ulemas, and all the high functionaries, who ushered him into the palace.

As soon as the ceremony of welcome was over, and the Pasha had greeted his parent with proper demonstrations of filial affection, the principal Beys were introduced to the diwan;—for it was in the glorious days of the Memlooks, before the arms of France had commenced the downfall of those brilliant though tyrannical warriors;—and though the

Pasha appointed by the Porte merely held a nominal sway in Egypt, etiquette required that this viceroy of the Soltán should receive every demonstration of respect; and however much his authority was scorned, the usages of courtesy were never neglected in their intercourse with the representative of the Caliph.

Much *empressement* was evinced towards the Pasha's father by the assembled Beys: they praised Allah for his safe arrival; he was assured that his presence had illumined the land of Egypt, and that the blessings of the soil would be redoubled as a consequence of his propitious visit. They talked of the splendor of the Ottoman empire, they lauded the name of the Soltán, and they declared that under the tutelary protection of the Caliph, Egypt was the most fertile country in the whole world.

"We are indebted for all," said Osmán Bey, "to the munificence of the Sheréef, and the Nile would cease to rise if his exalted majesty were to withdraw his countenance from this favored land."

The Pasha's father complimented the Memlooks on their military prowess, their valour in war, and their fidelity to the Soltán; though it was a notorious fact that they were virtually independent of him, and ridiculed his authority. They paid an annual tribute to the Porte, and a Pasha, appointed and sent from Constantinople, resided in the citadel, as the nominal ruler of the country; but his power was a mere word, his jurisdiction extended not beyond the precincts of his own palace, and his office, in fact, consisted in transmitting to Constantinople the taxes levied in Egypt by his *defterdár*. The Memlooks really governed the country; they could afford to talk of pretended obedience to the imperial authority, since it in no degree lessened their importance in their own estimation, whilst it served to flatter the Osmanli; and the

Porte, like a coquette, tolerated the slight it could not prevent, so long as it was disguised by outward appearances from the observation of the world.

Emin Bey sat on the right of the distinguished stranger; and after repeating in other words the praises of the Soltán, and attributing every blessing to his protection, "this," said he, "is a proof of it," and drawing from his pocket an apple, (a fruit then rare in Egypt), presented it to him with the usual expression, "*Booyoorun effendem*,"* adding, "may your children's children have faces as blooming as this fruit."

The old man thanked the Bey for his kindness, and to the great dismay of his son began to eat the apple, biting large pieces out of it, as he lauded its flavour; and then, having nibbled the core with the greatest composure, threw it out of the window, wiped his mouth with his handkerchief, and asked for another pipe. The Beys looked at each other, and even the soldiers attending in the diwan gave evident signs of surprise, whilst the Pasha endeavored to draw off the attention of his visitors by a succession of irrelevant remarks on every subject, except that which in England forms the basis of conversation,—the weather; and it was at length proposed that they should all visit the gardens of Roda (the island where, according to tradition, Moses was deposited in the bull-rushes), and afterwards return to dinner at the palace.

The Beys then took leave of the Pasha and his guest, and as soon as they were gone, and a wave of the hand had announced to the attendants his wish to be alone, the Pasha gently reproved his father for his want of good breeding, requesting that whenever he was in the company of the Beys, he should observe all the punctilios of etiquette. "Whenever," said he, "any one gives you an apple, or any present of that

* Answering to the Italian "*favorisca signore*," for which we have no adequate expression.

kind, you must kiss it, raise it to your head, and then put it into your pocket; and when they are gone you may eat it, or do whatever you like with it, but never think of eating it in their presence, it is contrary to all the usages of society; and besides, these malicious upstarts, ever ready to criticise all our actions, and to treat us with disrespect, will discover that we are people of low origin, which is a secret above all others to be concealed from them:" (for the fact was that the Pasha* had been a soldier of fortune, who had raised himself to the high rank he held by his conduct in the Russian war, and had been appointed through a court intrigue to the government of Egypt.)

"I will attend to it, my son; you know I do not understand your rules of etiquette, but any thing you tell me I will most scrupulously observe."

The Pasha and his father were not long in joining the Beys at the appointed place of rendezvous: and after several pipes and some nargilehs had been discussed, beneath the spreading sycamores, which with their thick branches shaded the banks of that beautiful island, they re-entered their painted *cangias*, and returned to the port of Cairo. Then following the same road, which in the morning had been thronged with so many spectators, and now seemed only to be frequented by strings of water-camels, they reached the palace, and awaited the hour of dinner.

Pipes being removed, a circular carpet was put down in the centre of the apartment, upon which a small table, or stool, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, was placed, bearing a round tray of silver gilt about four feet in diameter. Servants brought to each guest in succession a gold basin and ewer, to wash

* Some of the modern Egyptians have the malice to apply this tale of an occurrence which took place long ago, in the time of the Memlooks, to the present Pasha.

before the repast; and as the soup was placed in the centre of the tray, the party seated themselves round the table on the ground; the squeezing of several lemons into the tureen, the word *bismillah*, and the spoon of the master of the house dipped into the soup, inviting the company to commence.

The usual order of Turkish dishes begins with the soup, for which the use of a wooden spoon is permitted, the rest, with the exception of the pilau of rice, being "eaten with the fingers;" and though the dishes are distant from every one, it is required that none or very few drops of soup or gravy should fall between them and the person who eats, a continuous stream of direction to the edge of the tray being looked upon as a sign of great vulgarity. After the soup, follows a succession of thirty or forty dishes, one after the other, into which each dips with a piece of bread, and the repast ends with a joint of roast meat, frequently an entire sheep, followed by the pilau and confectionary of various kinds. Whenever any one is desirous of paying marked respect to a guest, it is customary for the person next to him, as soon as the roast joint is brought to table, to select a choice morsel, and present it to him, in order that, by placing it on the flat cake of bread before him, he may eat it more conveniently than when obliged to reach over to the dish in the centre of the table; and if particular respect is intended, a piece, partaking in size of the character of Benjamin's portion, is generally offered.

The commencement of dinner passed off without any event of consequence, and if the stream uniting the soup tureen, and other dishes, to the post of the Pasha's father, indicated no great refinement in his mode of eating, some excuse might be found in the supposed tremulous hand of age; and all would have been well but for the polite offices of Abdoo Bey, who, as soon as the roast sheep was brought, selected with

the eye of an epicure a choice piece of the saddle, and presented it to his neighbour. The old man, delighted at this mark of his attention, bowed unutterable thanks, and in order to make an acknowledgment in strict accordance with the usages of the exalted society to which he had been introduced, he kissed it, put it to his head, and deposited it carefully in his pocket. The agony and despair of the Pasha were indescribable; some of the Beys, covering their faces with their napkins, rushed from the table convulsed with laughter; all the respect for good manners, for which Orientals are so remarkable, could not check their unrestrainable feelings on so ludicrous an occasion; even the attendants feigned some excuse for leaving the room, lest by giving way to the impulse of the moment they should incur the anger of their master; and the Pasha, rising from the table, and taking his astonished father by the sleeve, retired to an adjoining chamber, where with undisguised mortification he exclaimed—

“What, in the name of the merciful Allah, could have come into your head to make you put a piece of meat into your pocket? ‘*Vullah, billah, agéeb*, wonderful!’”

“Why, my son, did you not tell me, when they gave me anything, to kiss it, and put it to my head, and then into my pocket?”

“I told you an apple, or any thing of that kind, when meeting together in a morning—did I say any thing of dinner?—did I say you were not to eat at meals? The world is at an end! Here,” opening a closet behind the couch, “take this, it contains a hundred purses; I will send you more when you reach home. Go back to Roomelie, and never, I pray you, think of paying me any more visits.”

IMAGINE'S REWARD:

A LEGEND OF THE RHINE.

BY MISS THEODOSIA GARROW.

PART FIRST.

Soft be the beams of the summer sun,
 Fresh be the bowering shade,
 And pleasant the greensward underfoot,
 And the clear sky overhead;
 For the Lady Imagine whiles the time
 In the fair gardens of Ildesheim.

Each minstrel harp in the broad Rhine land
 Rings forth that lady's praise;
 Each young heart burns 'neath its iron band
 On the solemn jousting days,
 When that lovely lady sits on high
 Awarding the palm of chivalry.

For where is a brow so pure as hers,
 Or a smile so frank and sweet,
 Or eyes so like to a summer sea
 When the sun shines over it?
 Where is so noble and lithe a form?
 Where is a heart so true and warm?

She hath sweet songs for her warlike sire,
Fond words for her mother fair;
The damsels that wait on her least desire
Win ever kind looks of her—
And hers are the rainbow smiles that bless
Fresh childhood's verdant wilderness.

And now with step as soft and light
As the evening wind at play,
Scarce thoughtful and scarce thoughtless, goes
The lady on her way,
With folded hands and shadowy eyes,
Low murmuring sweet old melodies.

She hath wandered by the jessamine hedge,
And through the warm rose bower;
She hath stopped beside the fountain's edge
To gaze on its sunny shower;
And the fragile cistus' bloom hath shed
Its petals fair on her braided head.

She watches the bees in the woodbine wreath,
And the lizards' golden green;
She lists to the chaunt of the grasshoppers
That sing in the leaves unseen—
When, hark! there rises a piteous cry
Of some wild creature's misery.

Up looked the Lady Imagine
As the small shrill voice she heard,
And fluttering round and round again
She saw a little gray bird,
Nearer to earth, and yet more near,
Circling, and crying for pain or fear.

She parted the green leaves silently,
She put back the rosebuds sweet,
Till she saw a serpent's gem-like eye
Gleam close beside her feet,
Where, coiled in a hideous knot, it lay
Watching the flight of its trembling prey.

Back started the lady with quickened breath,
As nigh the victim came
To the wide red slimy jaws beneath,
And the eager eye of flame—
Her beautiful cheek with tears grew wet
To think of the poor bird's cruel fate.

She rustled the boughs, she shook the flowers,
That still in the sunshine lay;
She scared the serpent with hand and voice,
And he slid in the grass away—
While the little gray bird, with powerless wing,
Fell on the green earth shuddering.

'Twas pleasant to see that lady bright
Sit under the clustering shade,
Smoothing its plumes with her fingers white,
And lifting its languid head,
And watching the light in its half-closed eye
Chase terror's glazed agony.

For there was a glow in her heart the while,
Which brightens the homeliest face,
Which addeth a charm to the highest lot,
And lends to the rudest grace—
Hers the kind heart and the helpful arm,
Which scorn not to succour the lowest worm.

She watched its life return again,
As it lay in her fair warm hand,
Till the dull stupor left its brain,
And it strove to rise and stand;
Then fluttering for awhile, at length
Soared upwards with recovered strength.

On the topmost branch of a slender tree
It sate in the golden light,
The lady looked back as she homewards went,
But the bird was still in sight,
Swaying and singing and glistening there,
Bathed in the love of the sunny air.

PART SECOND.

Otto of Schönberg! a joyous step,
A joyous heart hast thou,
Bending with eyes so fond and deep
Over thy young love's brow,
As with dance and banquet ye chase the time
In the stately halls of Ildesheim.

Thou hast told the tale of thy glowing heart,
And Imagine blushed and sighed;
She bade thee ask of her parents will
With a maiden's bashful pride—
But her sweet voice quivered and sank the while,
And there was love in her tearful smile.

Kindly answered the Baron then,
And sweetly answered the Dame;
For *she* thought on thy rich domain,
And *he* on thy noble name—
And the fairest flower in the broad Rhine-land
Hath taken a pledge of thy knightly hand.

The summer night is clear and fair,
The moon is at the full,
And two by two go forth the guests
To the gardens fresh and cool—
Afar and near in the still moonlight
Glance their tall plumes and jewels bright.

Some gather the nightbuds faint, and wreathe
Their brows with the dewy leaves;
Some linger the shadowy boughs beneath,
Whose checquered darkness weaves
A home, a shrine, a sacred grove,
For the first low voice of awakening Love.

Count Otto and fair Imagine,
They wandered on and on,
Till the leaping fount beside their path
In diamond sparkles shone—
And there 'neath the eyes of midnight Heaven,
Their hearts' first fervent troth was given.

Oh! the concentered poesy
Of those few broken words,
Which stray and vibrate timidly
Amid the young heart's chords!
The first love vow—the first love prayer—
The greenest spot in a waste of care!

Her hand is in her lover's clasp,
 Her gaze is lost on high,
 Her soul so full of strange deep peace,
 She were content to die—
 The sound of her own voice doth bear
 Unwonted sweetness to her ear.

And oh! to *him*—the wildest dream
 Of conquest's haughtiest hour,
 Whose price is bloodshed, woe, and shame,
 Could give no sense of power—
 Power to dare, and power to bless—
 Like those few moments' happiness.

* * * * *

The lady glanced around in fear,
 Her glowing cheek grew wan,
 As a hurried and heavy tread drew near,
 The tread of an armēd man;
 And Count Otto's squire, all hot with haste,
 Forth from the boughs' deep shadow passed.

"The foe is abroad in arms, my lord,"
 With panting voice said he,
 "And our liege hath summoned the Rhenish Knights
 To rouse them for victory—
 A hundred good lances by morning's dawn
 Wait for thy banner to lead them on."

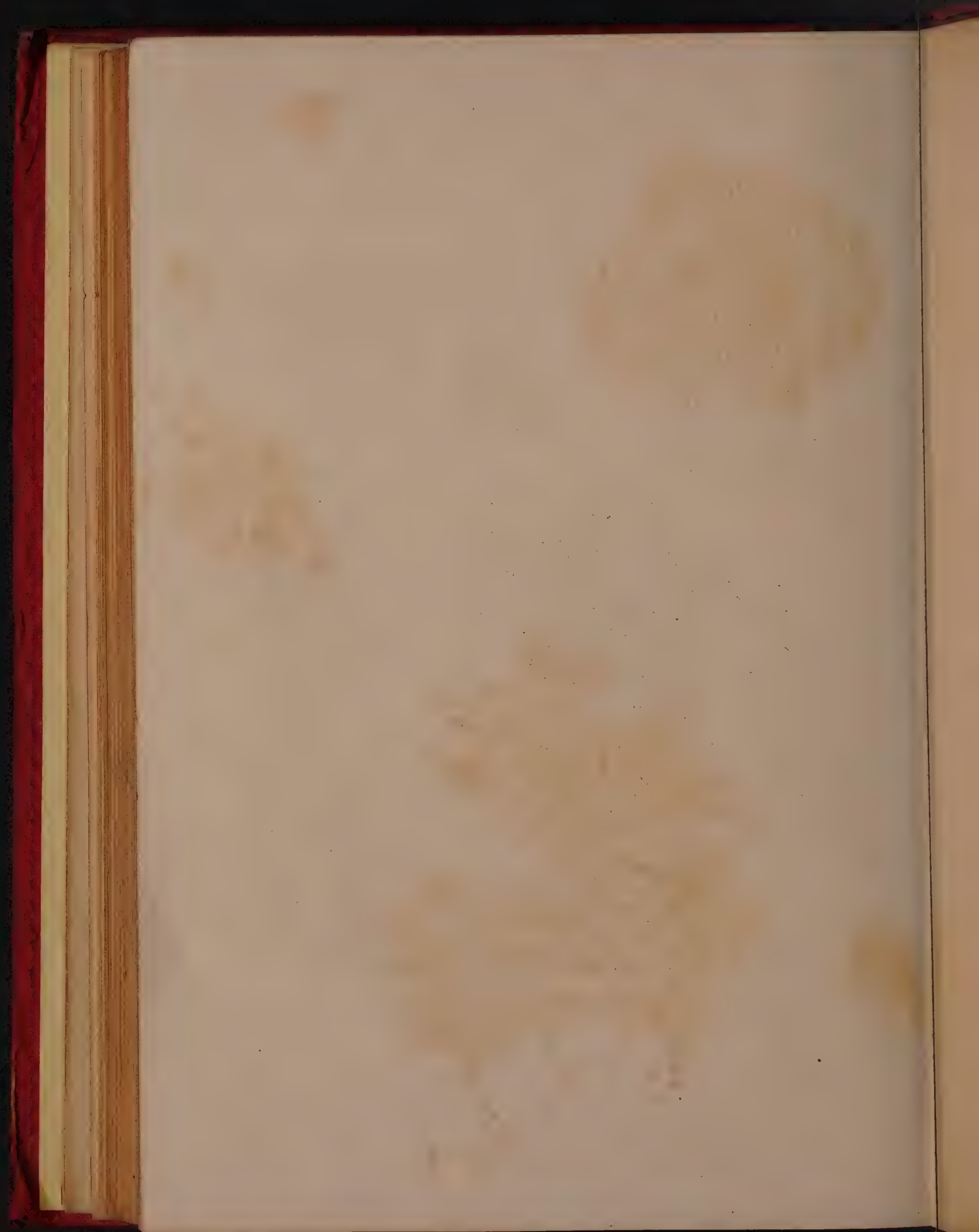
The maiden looked up in her lover's face,
 And her hand grew cold in his:
 Long shall it haunt him, that wistful gaze
 Of untold tenderness—
 In the tented field, in the fiery strife,
 E'en in the struggle 'twixt death and life.

* * * * *



W. H. W. S.

1851



They turned from the greenwood side by side,
They entered the castle hall,
With features white and motionless
As a corpse beneath its pall.
Cold, heavy, and black, is the shade of pain,
And when shall it pass away again?

Another hour—the grief of years
Is gathered in its course;
One long farewell, undewed by tears,
One blessing faint and hoarse,
One look!—his stately form is gone,
And she must face her woes *alone!*

PART THIRD.

There is a tower whose rugged head
Looks many a mile around,
Savage and grey as the rocks that form
Its high and pathless mound—
The tangled forest black and wide
Lies heaped beneath on every side.

Loth is the peasant to pass it by
After the close of light,
For many a sad and hollow cry
Sweeps round its walls at night;
And the owls hoot shrill o'er the desolate spot,
Where step of the living disturbs them not.

For twelve long months in that dreary place
A captive knight hath lain,
Till his heart is bowed by hopelessness,
And his noble limbs by pain—
Otto of Schönberg, the bright and brave,
Weareth his youth in a living grave.

Well had he fought and gallantly
On the fatal battle field,
Where his followers all lay down to die,
And he was forced to yield;
For the foemen dragged him from the press
In a swoon of deep unconsciousness.

They chained him in that ghastly tower,
They scarcely staunched his blood,
They left two warders stern and old
To guard his solitude,
And the thousand friends of his distant home
Know not the warrior's lingering doom.

His vassals await their chief's return,
His castle waits its lord,
His hound and falcon droop forlorn,
The rust o'erspreads his sword,
And his young beloved!—God give her power
To bear the weight of hour on hour.

Her gladdening song is heard no more,
Her smile hath lost its light,
And up and down, with restless step,
She wanders day and night,
Without a sigh, without a groan,
A moving, breathing form of stone.

Summer comes back to the forest deep,
Which girds the captive's cell,
But never a breath of its love can creep
To the dank and noisome well,
Where, shut from the air and the light of day,
Count Otto pines his life away.

He hath ceased to hope for liberty,
He hath ceased to long for home,
And the faint dizziness, which tells
That death will quickly come,
Brings him a joy which none can know,
Save in the grasp of despairing woe.

What needs that massive iron band
With rivets fast and sure?
A little child's unnerv'd hand
Might hold him now secure.
What needs each fetter's solid ring
On limbs that would yield to a silken string?

* * * * *

The warders bring his daily food
Into that den of pain,
And a weak voice, broken by shivering sighs,
Entreats them to remain—
At least for God's dear love to hear
The prayer of a dying prisoner.

"My suffering hath been hard to bear,
But it is well nigh done;
Oh! once more let me breathe the air,
And feel the cheering sun;
'Tis the last boon can pleasure me,
Refuse it not, for charity."

The warders passed their torches' light
Athwart the captive's face,
And even *their* rugged hearts were moved
To read its eagerness;—
They whispered together awhile, and then
Unlocked his heavy girdle-chain.

He crawled along the dungeon wall,
And up the ruined stair,
Where, like a blessed dream of Heaven,
Swept down the mild soft air;
He reached the tower's embattled crown,
And, gasping, fell in a deathlike swoon.

* * * * *

The captive's eyes uncloze again,
He gazes on the sky;—
There is scarcely a glimpse of hill or plain
'Twixt the battlements gray and high;
But, oh! 'tis enough once more to see
The heavens outspread so gloriously.

He lay in patient quietness
From noon till eventide,
And then he saw a little gray bird
Sit singing at his side,
With gladsome tone and fearless mien,
As he had its woodland comrade been.

It hovered around his drooping head,
It perched upon his breast,
A new desire for life it shed
O'er his soul's lethargic rest,
And his eyes o'erflowed with tears to see
That simple creature's charity.

All night Count Otto calmly slept
Beneath the open sky—
He stripped his vest of its stained gold
That little grace to buy;—
And, lo! 'ere dawn in the twilight dim,
The small bird hovered over him.

It brought a spray of forest fruit,
Starred o'er with silver dew,
A fresh flower, and a healing root,
Whose worth the captive knew;
It staid till the warden's step drew nigh,
Then rose and left him instantly.

And every morn and eve it came
With wholesome herbs and flowers,
That wakened the pulse of his weary heart,
And his body's wasted powers;
And he felt how dear in suffering
Is the love of any living thing.

His prison fare seemed sweet to taste,
His rest was deep and still,
And gentle visions of the past
His lonely hours did fill;
And stars and clouds, high throned in air,
To him as friends and comrades were.

On the tenth morn came the little gray bird,
And sweet flowers brought it none,
But it laid at his feet a golden hair,
And a precious ruby stone—
The price of a ransom five times told,
And a pledge from his lady's locks of gold.

* * * * *

“ Now see this gem, whose single worth
Outweighs a golden mine,
If thou to-night wilt let me forth,
This jewel shall be thine.
But, mark ! if thou receive it not,
I will fling it deep in yon black moat.

“ Now take the gem, and hie thee far,
While none may stop thy flight,
And live no more by the toil of war,
But revel in life's delight ;
Wealth, pleasure, ease, and power shall be
The costly price of liberty.

The warder gazed long at the sparkling stone,
With hand on the massive door ;
But the *love* of the old is avarice,
And it sways with a despot's power—
So he drew the bolts with a mingled smile
Of greedy joy and of secret guile.

For how may the paths be tracked by night
Which can hardly be found by day ?
And how may the savage beasts be 'scaped
Which roam their depths alway ?
Old warder ! little knowest thou
Of all that a grateful heart can do.

The knight had a friend in woe and want,
And he hath a faithful guide
To lead him away from the wild beasts' haunt,
To stop by the fountain side ;
To show him the banks where the wild fruits grow,
And each rough brake of the woods to know.

The small gray bird, with anxious love,
The weary wanderer led,
And through the night kept watch above
His rude and sylvan bed,
Or lured him 'neath the stars along
By the clear guidance of its song.

For many a night, for many a day,
Count Otto journeyed on.
When he passed the verge of that perilous wood,
The little gray bird was gone ;
But winding beneath in the broad sunshine
Lay the blue stream of the glorious Rhine.

* * * * *
There is a shout from the castled rocks !
A shout from the turrets high,
The seven-crested Drachenfels
Peals back the joyous cry,
To valley steep and sunlit plain—
“ Count Otto is returned again !”

And joy there is more fond and deep
Within his lady's bower ;
Quick smiles and tears glide o'er her lip
Like spring-tide sun and shower,
And hers the voice of happiness,
That quivers with its own excess.

And fair young faces throng around,
Grave with important care,
Among gay robes and snowy plumes,
And flowers and jewels rare,
While yet *she* sitteth silently,
And doubts her joy's reality.

Happy and beautiful ! once again
Ye stand in the castle hall ;
Far, far off seemeth the dream of pain,
And the present is all in all ;
While merrily echoes the minstrel's rhyme
Through the proud chambers of Ildesheim.

Go sleep ! go sleep ! fair Imagine,
Ere the midnight chimes have tolled,
For thou must rise with the early morn,
And braid thy locks of gold ;
Go sleep that last bright tear away,
For this is the eve of thy bridal day.

The lady to her couch is gone,
Good angels guard her rest !
Not lighter is the cygnet's down
Than the heart in her pure young breast ;
And the dream she dreamed that night shall be
For ever shrined in her memory.

She thought that by the garden fount
She stood beside her love,
And the bird that rescued him from death
Sate on a bough above,
Singing a strain on whose every note
Sweet human accents seemed to float.

" The kindly heart, the merciful hand,
A rich reward shall bring,
And God, who loveth a gracious deed,
Though done to the meanest thing,
Can strengthen the lowly, whose life he gave,
In the hour of peril, to shield and save."

Then wakes from sleep the gentle bride,
While the song around her rings,
And still she hears above her head
The sound of a small bird's wings,
And a little feather of pearly gray
Next morn on the bridal chaplet lay.

THE ANGEL'S LESSON.

BY EDWARD HOWARD, ESQ. AUTHOR OF "RATTLIN THE REEFER," ETC.

WHEN all was void, and all was night,
Uprose Creation's Sun, and, lo!
Dread Love, in countless streams of light
Shed on the infant world its glow.

Where'er those streams diverging fell,
Into existence flash'd fair things;
For flowers sprang up in mead and dell,
And brooks began their murmurings.

Though, from the mystic light above,
They knew an instantaneous birth,
Though modell'd by a Heavenly love
They were but various forms of earth.

When all was done and hail'd as good,
And earth laugh'd out one garden vast,
Then, in the midst, fair woman stood;—
The form, most beauteous, came the last.

The more to make her all his own,
A soul, God gave her, to adore:
No barren brightness now was known,
Creation smil'd in vain no more.

When Eve's bright daughters multiplied,
One far more lovely than them all
Repined that all things lovely died,
And most, that she herself must fall.

And thus her fears, in words, would give—
“ Mute things are far more blest than I;
Although they know not that they live,
Alas! I know that I must die.”

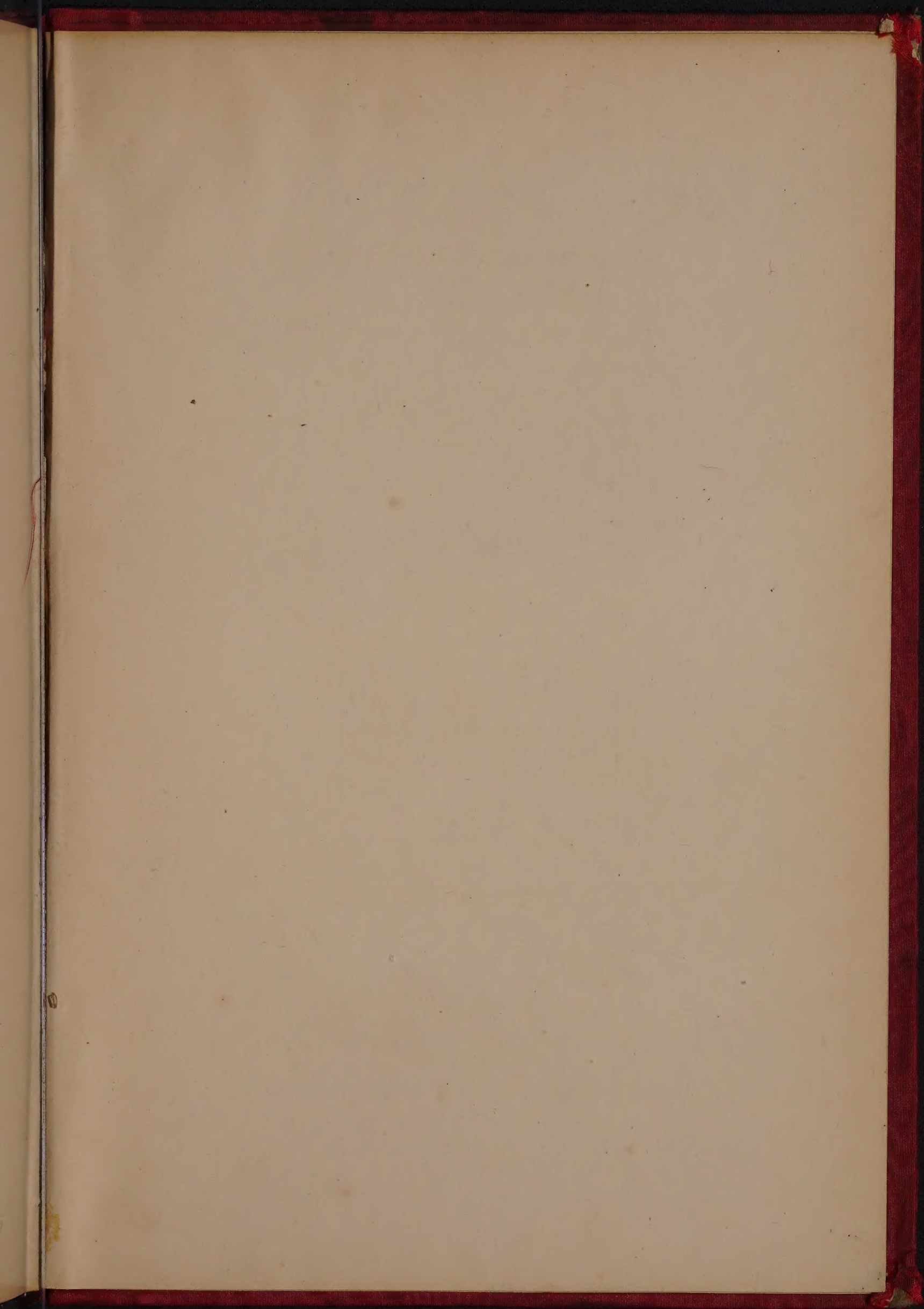
And, as in grief she bent her low,
With sorrowing, yet reproving mien,
Watching her unavailing woe,
Sudden, an angel-guest was seen.

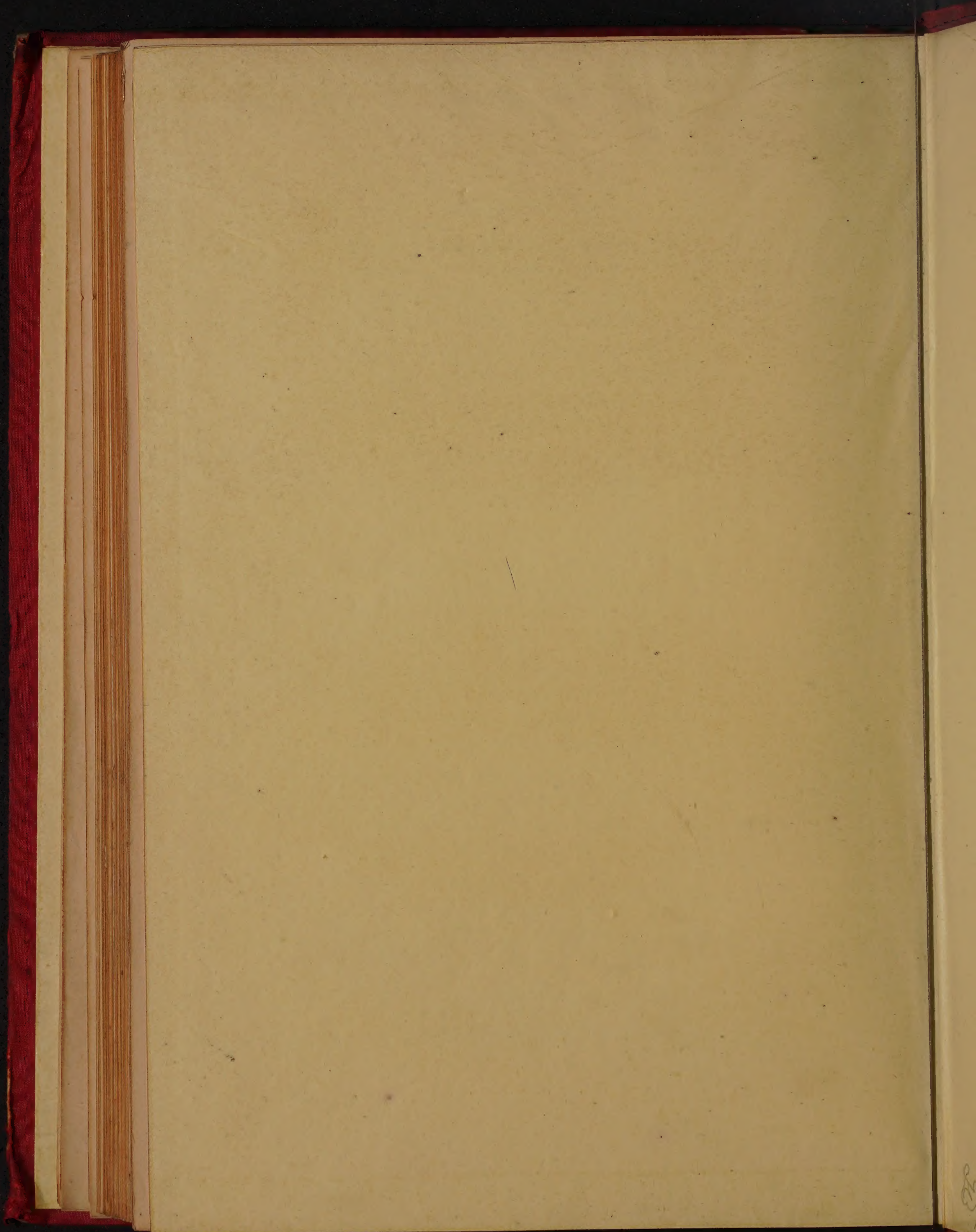
Silent, he placed before her eyes
A marble vase of purest white,
Then waved a fire-streak from the skies—
The vase was fill'd with Heav'nly light.

The flame that issued from that urn,
With all the clear effulgence shone
Of those twelve incense lamps that burn,
And veil with light the eternal throne.

The angel spake—“ 'Tis thine to trust.
Murmurer, behold! what 'tis to die.”
He smote the urn;—it fell to dust;—
The fire regain'd its native sky.

“ 'Tis thine, eternal life to claim,”—
And now, more lovingly he spake—
“ But ere can rise th' immortal flame,
The mortal vessel first must break!”





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